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A freedom-marcher in the late 1950s. The photograph is taken from *King Remembered* by Filip Schilke
and Pamela O. McPherson (303pp. W. W. Norton, £16.00/£9.95pb).

Cover picture

The stirring of black America

George M. Fredrickson

DAVID J. GARROW

Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference
800pp. New York: Morrow, \$19.95.

0688047947

ADAM FAIRCLOUGH

To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin
Luther King, Jr.
504pp. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

\$35 (paperback), \$17.95).

0820308986

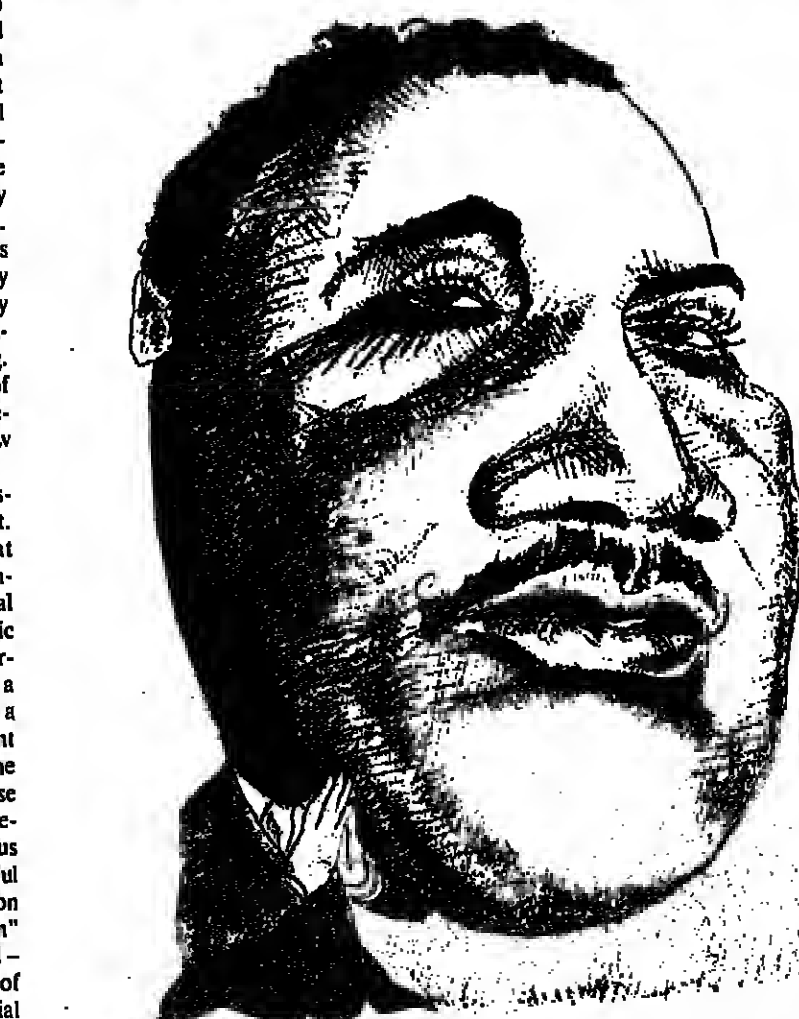
Now that the American civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s has become the object of intense and sophisticated historical investigation, a plethora of new information is coming to light on how the leadership made its decisions and conducted its campaigns. We in fact already know more about what the participants in this struggle said and did behind closed doors than we are ever likely to learn about the inner workings of earlier social reform movements in American history. The abolitionists, woman's suffragists and prohibitionists - to take three prominent crusades of the past - did not tell their stories to skilled interviewers with tape recorders and certainly were not kept under close surveillance by the FBI. But oral testimony and verbatim reports of private conversations, like other kinds of historical source material, do not speak for themselves; they have to be selected, organized and evaluated. The most interesting and significant questions are not directly answered by such "facts"; they become resolvable in satisfying ways only when the historian is able to work his information into larger patterns of meaning. As interpretation proceeds, differences of opinion emerge and certain "issues" are defined that stimulate further inquiry and new interpretations.

Seen from this vantage-point, civil rights history is in a very early stage of development. The fundamental question of causation - what preconditions and precipitating factors enabled a mass protest movement against racial segregation to arise and achieve some dramatic successes at that particular moment in American history - has scarcely been addressed in a systematic way. The paradoxical fact that a radical, if non-violent, protest movement brought significant social change at a time when the mood of the country was otherwise quite conservative has not been much remarked upon or thought about. As a stimulus for discussion if nothing else, it would be useful if some brave historian of Marxist persuasion were to argue that the civil rights "revolution" - or at least the legislation that it produced - was at bottom a successful adjustment of American capitalism to immediate or potential threats to its hegemony.

If the biggest questions have not yet been posed, certain lesser issues are clearly on the agenda. One of these concerns the personal role and historical significance of Martin Luther King, Jr. There is no doubt that King was the single most important leader of the black freedom struggle. But how important was he in relation to other sources of strength and initiative within the movement? Clearly the popular notion, as reflected in the establishment of King's birthday as a national holiday, is that King was the movement, or as much of it as deserves to be commemorated. Few historians would be prepared to reduce history to biography in this simple fashion. But it is arguable whether King's personal leadership was indispensable to the campaign against the Jim Crow laws (segregation in the American South) or whether he served merely as the convenient and useful symbol for a great stirring of black America that could not have been denied even if he had never lived. Standing behind this, of course, is the perennial debate about the role of personality and individual greatness in history. The argument takes on a distinctly modern form, however, as the current tendency of social historians to play down the role of "divers" in favour of a populist "history from the bottom up" collides with the Weberian view that individual "charisma" is a historical force in its own right.

David J. Garrow's book *Bearing the Cross* and Adam Fairclough's *To Redeem the Soul of*

America tend to come down on opposite sides, or at least at different points on a spectrum of opinion about King's personal role. Both authors quote Ella Baker's well-known judgment that "the movement made Martin rather than Martin making the movement". Garrow endorses Baker's opinion without qualification, calling it in his conclusion "the crucial point, the central fact of his life". Fairclough, on the other hand, seems to come to the conclusion that King made the movement - or at least his branch of it, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference - at least as much as it made him; his unique qualities left their stamp, and if nothing else, he was the only black leader who could mediate effectively between two key loci of the movement's support, "the fundamentalist culture of the Southern black church and the intellectual culture of the Northern white university". It is paradoxical that Garrow's detailed "personal portrait" makes no substantial claim for King as an autonomous mover and shaker, while Fairclough, who is writing a history of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, emphasizes King's unique contribution and crucial role in the organization's leader. The inversion of terms in the similar



subtleties of the two books accurately reflects their differing priorities of coverage and focus, but does not prepare the reader for their subtle but significant disagreement on King's function and importance.

David Garrow's *Bearing the Cross* is a monumental work of biographical scholarship, clearly the fullest record we possess - or are likely to possess for a long time - of King's actions between the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955-6 and his assassination in Memphis in 1968. It is not quite a definitive biography since it covers King's early life in a relatively cursory way, treating it merely as the background to his career in the public eye. (An important study remains to be written of King's early years and the influences that made him what he was in 1955.) From the point when King was called on to lead the campaign to desegregate public transportation in Montgomery, Alabama, Garrow provides an almost day-by-day account of what he did and said. We even find out where he took his vacations and (thanks to the FBI) learn much about his remarkably active sex life. (At a time when newspaper accounts of extramarital philandering are forcing the withdrawal of American presidential candidates, exercised by the press in the 1960s, J. Edgar Hoover attempted to discredit King by providing the media with evidence of his adulteries, but for the most part they refused to make use of it.) Garrow's approach is essen-

tially straightforward narrative history with little in the way of analysis or interpretation. When he wants to make a point, he normally does it indirectly, through his choice of quotes from King's associates or other contemporary observers. Despite - or perhaps because of - the way it piles up massive and sometimes apparently inconsequential detail, the book makes absorbing reading. Although its prose is only serviceable at best, it succeeds in drawing the reader into the flow of events and conveying a vivid sense of what King experienced, at ordinary as well as exceptional moments. One is impressed above all with how painful, difficult and dangerous it was to be in his position.

One of Garrow's central themes is that King did not seek or welcome leadership in the movement. His involvement in the Albany, Georgia, protests of 1961-2 was, according to Garrow, "just like the Montgomery boycott, just like the Atlanta sit-ins, just like the Freedom Rides. It was not an involvement that Martin King had sought out, not a protest he had instigated or planned, not an event that he was eager to be involved in." What his role required, it seems from reading Garrow, was

after midnight on January 27, 1956, King was sitting alone at his kitchen table reflecting on the anonymous phone calls he had had, when, as he later recalled, "I could hear an inner voice saying to me, 'Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness. Stand up for justice. Stand up for truth. And I will be with you until the end of the world.' ... Almost at once my hours began to go. My uncertainty disappeared." Garrow makes much of this kitchen-table revelation; indeed the sense of mission that it engendered is his total explanation for the inner strength that enabled King to carry on for more than twelve years in the face of extreme physical dangers and psychological pressures. It is not easy to think of a better explanation.

Although he is used by King's religious faith, Garrow shows scant interest in its content or in the religious thought that surrounded it. He records little significance to the fact that King was a trained theologian who had wrestled with the "crisis theology" of Niebuhr and Tillich; he is clearly not inclined to take King seriously as a religious thinker or to explore the relevance to his activism of a sustained intellectual effort to reconcile black evangelicism with the existentialist, "neo-orthodox" version of white liberal Protestantism. But we may anticipate other studies that will attempt to root King's psychological strength and prophetic vision in his religious thought as well as in his personal piety.

The book's main shortcoming is inseparable from its virtues. By focusing so heavily on King's immediate circumstances and eschewing any claim that King created or dominated the civil rights movement, Garrow denies himself the opportunity to advance new interpretations of the causes, character and significance of the black freedom struggle as a whole. Except to the extent that we reorganize and re-evaluate for ourselves the facts that he has uncovered, we are left with little new understanding of the larger meaning of the events he describes so minutely. Clearly Garrow aimed simply to write the definitive chronicle of King's life during the period of his public eminence; and we should be grateful that he has performed the task with such skill and integrity.

Adam Fairclough's *To Redeem the Soul of America* covers much the same ground as *Bearing the Cross*, but events are described in less detail and more effort is made to explain them, put them into historical perspective, and register disagreement with other historians on controversial points. Given the enormous popular and critical acclaim for *Bearing the Cross*, Fairclough's fine study may be in danger of being overlooked or given short shrift. Garrow has covered King and SCLC so thoroughly that his volume will remain an indispensable tool for decades to come, but Fairclough's work, although its lifespan may be shorter, should in the meantime prove more useful to those seeking a general understanding of the crusade that King led and exemplified.

Fairclough's King exercises a more active and commanding kind of leadership than Garrow's. "His death", Fairclough concludes, "revealed how completely he dominated [SCLC] through intellect, personality, and organizational skill." After giving due weight to King's crucial public-relations role and his obvious courage and idealism, Fairclough goes on to praise his "more subtle qualities of leadership", his "ability to use people - not in a manipulative or exploitative manner, but in the sense of utilizing their talents to further an ideal. Unrelentingly self-critical himself, he tolerated weakness, frailty, and error in his colleagues for the sake of harnessing their strengths." According to this view, King's apparent vacillation, indecisiveness and tolerance of squabbling among his associates - which from Garrow's account could be taken as personal weaknesses or obstacles to the movement's success - become hallmarks of an astute and effective style of leadership.

Although Fairclough verges at times on making King and SCLC anonymous, he is too good a historian to base his account primarily on a mysterious and accidental charisma, and he locates both the man and the organization in their specific social context. Clergymen like King and SCLC's other leaders were in the vanguard of the Southern civil rights movement, partly because they had an economic

John G. Cawelt

independence denied to members of the black middle class who were "vulnerable to white economic retaliation". Unlike teachers, academics and businessmen, ministers were supported exclusively by blacks, and, what is more, by the strongest independent organizations in the black community – the Churches. Fairclough also notes in passing that the black Church provided a reservoir of idealism and commitment upon which black clergymen could draw once they embarked on a mass movement for racial reform.

He chooses, however, not to explore the ideology and culture of Southern black Christianity, preferring to concentrate on "the rational calculation behind SCLC" – an avoidance of the emotional and religious side of the movement which helps to give his study coherence, but at the expense of comprehensiveness. Fairclough does a convincing job of demonstrating that SCLC (whatever its ultimate inspiration) pursued its objectives in a remarkably rational way and that its effectiveness owed much to King's pragmatic leadership. He disputes the view – set forth by Garrow among others – that the movement's tactic of non-

violence began as a naive belief that white racists could be converted by moral example, that their Christian and democratic consciences could be aroused by symbolic acts revealing the cruelty and injustice of segregation, and that it was only after the failure of this moral appeal that non-violence became a hard-headed coercive strategy. He acknowledges King's deep commitment to the morality of passive resistance, but denies that King "ever believed that nonviolent protest functioned solely, or even mainly as a form of moral persuasion". He finds evidence from the earliest days of the struggle that King appreciated "the necessity of power" and was enough of a realist to recognize that economic pressure, usually in the form of boycotts, was essential to the success of the movement.

He defends King and his associates, on the other hand, from charges that they deliberately provoked lethal violence, in a Machiavellian bid to nurse public sympathy in the North and compel federal intervention. He points out that the movement "elicited relatively little white violence". The classic confrontations in Birmingham and Selma were carefully urch-

trated to reveal the violent propensities of racist whites without actually resulting in serious bloodshed. Ensuring that TV cameramen and newspaper reporters were present in large numbers served to restrain white-supremacist policemen and state troopers: "SCLC sought to evoke dramatic violence rather than deadly violence, and King, as one commentator pointed out in 1965, constantly retreated 'from situations that might result in the deaths of his followers'."

Fairclough makes a strong case that SCLC was a finely tuned and flexible instrument of reform and that King, besides being an inspirational leader, was also a master tactician. But we would have to go back to Garrow – and well beyond – to discover what it was that gave King and the other ministers active in SCLC the will to persevere from day to day in their struggle against the entrenched racial order, in the face of resistance from Southern white-supremacists and the inertia of a federal government exceedingly reluctant to intervene in the Southern states in protection of legally recognized black rights (or even black lives) during the decade of agitation that preceded the Civil

Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965. Nor does Fairclough explain what enabled the leaders of SCLC to withstand the intimidation and violence that their protest evoked, and to refuse the debilitating compromises offered by white liberals and moderates. Their staying power and ability to keep their "eyes on the prize" at full legal and political equality came, as Garrow shows, from an unshakeable sense that God and history were on their side. This conviction was born of a fusion of American democratic idealism and black religious culture. The sense of mission that Garrow ascribes to King personally must also be attributed to SCLC as a whole, and to the Southern civil rights movement in general. Neither King's kitchen-table epiphany nor a sociological analysis of clerical leadership exhausts the subject of the movement's religious direction and inspiration. An entirely adequate account of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference will have to begin with a deeper and fuller appreciation of the Southern black Church as an institutional and ideological force than either of these otherwise excellent books provide.

status vis-à-vis the Boston Brahmin establishment, which intensified the Kennedys' ambition for social acceptance. Joseph Jr was the embodiment of the family's aspirations but he was killed on active service in 1944. His beautiful sister, Kathleen, married the heir to the Duke of Devonshire during the same year, but within months was widowed and in 1948 was herself killed in a plane crash in Europe. The third member of the "golden trio", John Fitzgerald Kennedy, was elected president of the United States in 1960. The Boston Irish seemed, finally, to have arrived, but he was assassinated in 1963.

This is, indeed, an American saga and Goodwin presents the dynasty with a fluency which gushes forth, with nicknames and informal diminutives helping to create an impression of insider's knowledge. Oral history is uncritically appropriated, so that thoughts that can have no confirmation beyond family mythology are attributed to specific people. It seems altogether too fanciful to suppose that Rose Fitzgerald, had she been allowed to attend Wellesley College as she wished, might have become the first Catholic president of the United States instead of her son. It is not easy to sympathize with a millionaire ambassador's

wife who complains that during a period of Court mourning she had so many parties to go to and so few black dresses. Despite the rhetoric of the secure family both parents were frequently away, separately; neither attended Joe Jr's graduation, the father kept a check on all his children's dates, and had a lobotomy performed on the retarded daughter Rosemary without even informing his wife. This book strongly suggests that the idea of the family became a substitute for parental care. And in the case of the Fitzgeralds and Kennedys the personalities concerned were strong enough to be able to impose a pretence of reality that became self-fulfilling.

This large and sprawling book demands no previous knowledge on the part of its readers. There are therefore frequent excursions into the social history of Boston, the nature of the stock market, the film industry and so on. These are neatly done and indicate what a good narrative historian the author is, but Goodwin's method of allowing the family to expose itself gives the book a total impact which, if intended, makes it a subtle and sophisticated volume of revisionist history. Otherwise it is a disturbing piece of writing from someone trained in better ways.

the expense of someone else, especially some discriminated-against minority, Jews in particular. Still he could be generous and brave and even conscious of the slightly ridiculous figure he cut.

Yet, however important to literary scholars these collections of letters are, they will make little difference in our assessment of Menckens general cultural importance. Despite his scorn for the avant-garde, Mencken paved the way for modernism, bullying and laughing the genteel tradition out of existence. Still, he was no Edmund Wilson, and it is perhaps Mencken the humorist who will prove most enduring. Though at times he could sound like a slightly less brilliant Evelyn Waugh, his true precursor was Mark Twain, another compulsively funny man haunted by nothingness and gentility. Finally, however, Mencken was that rarest of creatures in American cultural life – a reactionary without a religious bone in his body and a conservative with a sense of the ridiculous.

With *All My Might*, the autobiography of Brskine Caldwell (322pp. Atlanta, Georgia: Peachtree: \$19.95, 0 934601 11 9) was published shortly before the author's death earlier this year. Caldwell was the author of over fifty books, the first of them published in 1929; he had his major successes with two novels, *Tobacco Road* (1932) and *God's Little Acre* (1933). His autobiography, highlighted with surprisingly vivid recollections of conversations that took place over seventy years ago, describes the story of his early days as a reporter, his several marriages, and the writing of his novels.

Mothers and daughters

Virginia Llewellyn Smith

TANIA ALEXANDER
A Little of All These: An Estonian childhood
168pp. Cape. £12.50.
0234 024000
LUCY ADDISON
Letters from Latvia
Edited by Rhona Chave
133pp. Macdonald. £9.95.
0356 03569 5
FLORA LEIPMAN
The Long Journey Home: The memoirs of Flora Leipman
240pp. Bantam. £12.95.
0993 010337
EUGENIA HUNTINGDON
The Unsettled Account: An autobiography
225pp. Severn House. £9.95.
02728 20803

"Please don't forget my name; I'll never forget yours." This was the way prisoners were able to pass on messages to other prisoners . . . Those who did not have paper wrote messages on bits of their petticoats and tore them off. If the train stayed for an hour or two, the whole platform would be covered with these messages.

The year is 1937, the train one of those that carried thousands of deportees – Russians, Jews, Poles – across the Soviet Union to exile and the labour camps. In a patternless existence, where destinies and destinations appeared totally arbitrary, a name remembered, an address passed on, might just be the link that would reconnect a divided family. Each of the books reviewed here is a record of lives disrupted by revolution and war in Eastern Europe. They are the stories of those who survived, and a memorial to those who did not.

The title of Tania Alexander's *A Little of All These* alludes to the racial mixture – Scandinavian, Teutonic and Slav – found in Estonia, where she grew up. Her book is the odd one out here, because Tania was out of it when the Second World War started, sent to England for safety. Though her father, a victim of post-revolutionary violence, was found shot dead on his estate, Kallijärvi, Tania's childhood there was peaceful and happy. She recalls nostalgically that vanished world, the beauty of the place, its simple social pleasures, good plain food and the good plain common sense of her Aunt Zofia and Irish governess, Micky, who presided over all. Tania Alexander pays tribute to the stoic endurance of these women, both of whom suffered much in the loss of their homes and family. All this is told, however, in a determinedly impersonal style, so that, except in one case, the "powerful personalities" described remain stiffly inscrutable.

The exception is Tania's mother, the celebrated *femme fatale* Moura Budberg, whose love affairs with Robert Bruce Lockhart, Maxim Gorky and H. G. Wells are recounted here (as they have been elsewhere). Where Micky and Aunt Zofia come alive is in Tania's sharp perception of what they, left to bring up her children, thought of Moura. When Tania lived with her mother in England, she saw how her mother used and was jealous of her. Her acknowledgement of Moura's "great courage and determination" (undeniable – Moura was a survivor if ever there was one) sounds like the perfunctory salutation of a well-brought-up child; and is followed by an ironic account of Moura's "long life on the fringe of literature" (an admirer being described as "another of those to whom Moura had entrusted the sole rights in her biography"). Tania concludes by asserting that her mother was larger than the legend, but offers no evidence that Moura Budberg was greater than the sum of her parts, or partners. History, biography, an exploration of the relationship between mother and daughter: Tania Alexander's book is a little of all these, but not enough of any one of them.

Letters from Latvia, on the other hand, is a concentrated slice of one woman's life, strongly flavoured with her own personality: Lucy Addison grew up and married within a small English community that had been in Latvia for several generations. In 1939 she sent her granddaughters to England; her letters to them, and the journal she kept bare witness to subsequent events. The Balls were shipped off to

Germany: "Serves them right for grumbling", commented Mrs Addison, seeing through Hitler's promise of a better life in the Fatherland. Came the "Bolshis", and the Addisons were turned out of their home; but – luckier than 45,000 deported Letts – were able to move in with their son. Then the Germans invaded, and Mrs Addison records Nazi atrocities of a kind which now make familiar reading. On the road from Riga she met an old Jewish woman, exhausted and left behind by her fleeing family: "I gave her a walking-stick and bade her god-speed." Herself over eighty, Mrs Addison found the German soldiers "well-behaved" and "polite and civil to old ladies".

If, with hindsight, one inevitably finds her way with human suffering rather too brisk, it must be remembered that her apparent detachment owed much to old age and to a type of upbringing which decreed that displays of emotion should be kept firmly within the domestic, and especially female, circle. Lucy Addison's letters are full of vitality and humour, but she bares her soul only in her yearning to see her granddaughters again. She never did, though she and her husband survived until 1946, thanks to the goodwill of neighbours and, in particular, to the devotion of their unmurdered daughter. The Addisons' coffins were draped

with the Union Jack. Being British may have meant a lot to Lucy; yet it is clear that being the linchpin of a loving family meant much more.

Thirty-seven years after Lucy Addison's death, Flora Leipman, a middle-aged Scots woman and Soviet citizen, kept a poster of the Royal Wedding hidden in her wardrobe in Batumi, on the Black Sea. In 1932 after the death of her husband, Flora's Russian-born mother had removed her four children from a happy, comfortable existence in Glasgow and taken them to Leningrad to live with her brother – who was understandably reluctant, given the climate of the times, to welcome foreigners into his home. The mother was arrested as a spy, the family split up, and Flora was deported alone, aged nineteen, to Kazakhstan. The memory of Britain and her family seemed to her then a lifeline to sanity. Her story, *The Long Journey Home*, is at times a bewilderingly rapid sequence of places and relationships that effectively conveys the disorientation of those terrible times. Nothing, on the face of it, made sense. Only dreams, usually sinister, seemed to foretell the future. A prisoner might escape the worst, but without knowing why, or by whose intervention.

Flora survived the dangers and degradation of camp life and the harsh conditions of the

steppe – in summer malaria, in winter cold so intense that the corpses from the hospital morgue had to be propped up like tailor's dummy mounds the stove before an autopsy could be performed. Flora acquired nursing skills and, finding her mother after fifteen years, built a new "rehabilitated" life for them together. At the end of it, her mother had accepted the Soviet system and Flora's niece, the daughter of her sister Cecile who had died in a camp, broke off all contact with her "English spy" relations. For Flora, Britain became more than ever a symbol of her otherness, and last hope. Only in 1984 did she obtain an exit visa. One is glad that her eventual reunion with her mother in the West happened after her story was written: it would have made an ending too moving to bear telling.

The Unsettled Account, an autobiography in certain respects similar to Flora Leipman's, begins as the story of a young army officer's wife in Poland between the wars. Eugenia Huntingdon sets herself up as the epitome of a pampered bourgeoisie: attractive, elegant, not very maternal, with a husband, Nik, who gave her everything she wanted. Then, in September 1939, the Russians invaded, and Eugenia describes, with the same frankness and no trace of self-pity, how Nik went missing, and she herself was sent into exile with her young son. In Kazakhstan she made her home with three other Polish women and their four children: together they worked in the fields, sewed finery for the local women out of hoarded remnants, learnt to bribe and to barter. A Polish neighbour with two marriageable daughters complained of a Kazakh who kept hanging around her hut, crumpling lice between his teeth as was the native habit. To Eugenia, who spoke Russian, felt the embarrassment of explaining what he wanted: not a wife, but the mother's gold tooth.

Evident throughout Eugenia's narrative are her sense of humour, interest in people and gratitude for such kindness as came her way – all things which strengthened her will to live in an environment not only physically hostile but poisoned by racial antagonism and the deceptions and betrayals engendered by the struggle for survival. She had to live, for her son's sake, and Nik's, if he was alive. What emerges clearly from her account, as from Flora Leipman's, is that perhaps the heaviest burden borne by women in their position was the burden of decision. To attempt escape, or to stay put? To lie, to tell the truth? No one knew how things might develop, but one wrong decision could spell the end of the story.

In this collective catalogue of human suffering, the most eloquent image is one of final severance: a small child's body is passed through a carriage window so that strangers standing on the platform might bury it; the train, carrying the mother, rolls on.



Michael Ignatieff's grandparents, Paul and Nausha Ignatieff, outside their home in Upper Melbourne, Quebec, in 1944. A detail from a photograph in the book reviewed below.

The grandparents' story

Roger Scruton

MICHAEL IGNATIEFF
The Russian Album
191pp. Chatto and Windus. £12.95.
07011 31098

The Russian Album tells the story of Michael Ignatieff's grandparents – Count Paul Ignatieff, and his wife, Princess Natasha Mestcharko. The book is a work of pity – a memorial to people whom the author wished to love but who died before he could know them. Both Paul and Natasha left manuscript memoirs of their Russian years – the one as politician, diplomat and (eventually) last Minister of Education in the Cabinet of Tsar Nicholas II, the other as a fertile wife and mother, whose warm good sense was eventually to see the family through the ordeal of revolution and into English and Canadian exile. From these memoirs, and from his own researches, Ignatieff has constructed an artful and touching story, rich in detail, and also a model of narrative economy.

The book is a conscious search for roots, and the reader never loses sight of the anxious, nomadic author standing in the wings, identifying with his characters, and attending to their

words and gestures with a vivid personal concern. In a characteristic introductory chapter, Ignatieff reflects on the need for family ties, and for connection with history that will illuminate and justify the burden of inherited culture. "Because emigration, exile and expatriation are now the normal condition of existence," he asserts (with untypical exaggeration), "it is almost impossible to find the right words for rootedness and belonging. Our need for home is cast in the language of loss; indeed, to have that need met all you have to be already homeless." One senses, in those words, the influence of Nabokov, whose father was a close friend of Paul Ignatieff. And one senses the mood of Ignatieff's book: reflective, questioning, and not without a touch of justified nostalgia.

Paul Ignatieff was a liberal reformist, of the kind familiar from so many Russian novels: a genuine aristocrat, who married in his personality the new aspirations of his class with a firm practical sense, and a democratic plainness of spirit. His grandson's portrait of him is warm and sympathetic, and even if it contributes little to our historical understanding, it adds a dimension to its subject-matter which is absent from most works of history. Paul is shown from within, from the presumed states of consciousness, the moral impulses, and the personal loves which were his first concern. His

other life, as a reluctant politician, is given no greater emphasis than is fitting to it, and is seen as an extension of that broad human sympathy which made Ignatieff so agreeable a member of his doomed and disparaged class.

Although Michael Ignatieff is rightly sparing of political judgments, and unconcerned either to defend or to criticize the ramshackle Tsardom in its last spasms of helplessness, it is impossible not to feel a strong surge of attraction, not only towards Paul Ignatieff, but also towards the ideal which inspired him, of a constitutional monarchy and a liberal rule of law. Had Ignatieff and his kind succeeded in carrying out the reforms to which they dedicated their energies, and had Russia not experienced the impact of the First World War, it is possible that the Soviet Union would never have arisen, and that the rule of law would never have been extinguished in the Russian homeland. Certainly no reader of this book can come away from it with the belief that Tsarist Russia was indistinguishable, in point of oppressiveness, lawlessness and arbitrary power, from its Leninist successor: That which everybody ought to have learned from Tolstoy, Turgenyev, Chakhov and Lermontov they can find again, firmly but delicately inscribed, in this book by one of the most engaging liberal intellects of our generation.

Fantasy of a family

David Adams

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN
The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys: An American saga
932pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £16.95.
0297 790900

The story of the Fitzgeralds of the North End and the Kennedys of Eastern Boston, Irish immigrant families both, is at once typical and exceptional. Thomas Fitzgerald, labourer, pedlar, keeper of a "grocery-groggery", had among his twelve children a third son, John Fitzgerald, who became a newshyxtomard, pupil at the Latin School, Harvard medical student, and political soldier for the North End Democratic Party machine. He graduated from ward-heeler to councilman, state senator, US congressman and finally, on January 1, 1906, was installed as mayor of Boston. His was a scandal-ridden administration, but perhaps no more so than most. His eldest daughter, Rose, became enamoured of Joseph Kennedy, whose father was a tavern-keeper, active in Democratic politics, who had served

Griping and bragging

Richard King

THOMAS P. RIGGIO (Editor)
Dreiser-Mencken Letters: The correspondence of Theodore Dreiser and H. L. Mencken, 1907-1945
Two volumes, 843pp. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Volume One, £29.70, Volume Two, £33.95; £59.45 the set.
08122 80083
PETER W. DOWELL (Editor)
"Ich Kuss die Hand": The letters of H. L. Mencken to Gretchen Hood
150pp. University of Alabama Press. \$19.95.
08173 02964

"Need 3 funny editorials. Bad. Can I get them Monday?" wrote Theodore Dreiser, then a magazine editor, to a young writer named H. L. Mencken in 1907. Both men lived from, as well as for, their writing – mainly novels in the case of Dreiser; literary and cultural criticism as well as books on language, religion, philosophy and politics in the case of Mencken. Eventually, they exchanged enough letters to fill two hefty volumes, now edited with useful introductory material by Thomas P. Riggio.

Neither man's reputation or influence has survived intact. With Mencken's critical help, Dreiser moved and stuck the American reading public in the first two decades of this century; yet Dreiser is now more studied in universities than read with pleasure or shock. For several decades Mencken was every closet rebel's favourite iconoclast, the scourge of the "booboisie" and bohemians, of anti-evolution-

ists and political radicals ("red-iok" boys), of Protestants, Catholics and Jews, of genteel traditionalists ("the lady critics, male and female") and British culture ("English pecksniffery must be crushed"). He wrote to Dreiser with disarming insouciance in 1914: "Give me health and strength we can shake the American Jericho to its fourth sub-story." Yet by the early 1930s he had become a cranky reactionary, inveighing against Franklin D. Roosevelt and all his works. Mencken's influence hardly survived the Depression.

The correspondence between Mencken and Dreiser stretches from 1907 to Dreiser's death in 1945 and is dominated by two concerns. Because Dreiser was dogged by the censors throughout his early career, he and Mencken griped ceaselessly about the power of American priggery and the perfidy of American publishers. Mencken's advice was consistently solicited by the novelist; several letters contain truncated critiques of Dreiser's work which Dreiser later worked up into longer essays on Dreiser's fiction and published in *Sinari Set*, *Seven Arts*, *American Mercury*, plus various daily newspapers, on into the 1920s. As time passed, Mencken's initial enthusiasm for Dreiser's work waned. Riggio helpfully reprints the essays and in them we see Mencken's enthusiasm for a radical new talent shift to a sometimes brutal dissection of Dreiser's shortcomings – a cumbersome style; a lack of shape to his novels; a weakness for the pseudo-profound and the semi-mythical. Dreiser had to take a lot of this literary bashing, and eventually broke off the correspondence for several years.

The other main concern of the letters is with American culture generally and its hostility to the artist in particular. Taking American culture to be either native philistine or derivative of "the snobbery of English intellectualty", Mencken and Dreiser were devoted Germanophiles to war and peace. Mencken fancied himself a kind of New World Nietzsche. But his racial, sexual and religious jibes were often offensive. "Don't move!" he advised Gretchen Hood; a singer living in Washington, DC, with whom he exchanged letters and flirtations in the 1920s and 30s, "the coons may be bad, but they are better than whites".

If philistinism and puritanism were prime cultural enemies, then opposition to Prohibition was the closest Mencken came to political radicalism. The 1930s found Dreiser moving left politically, while Mencken, ever the Germanophile, could write as late as 1941: "Whether or not Hitler has invented anything better, I can't make out." The letters are marked by a running series of jokes about the two men's sexual prowess, their fondness for drink and their contempt for religion of any sort. Mencken, for instance, frequently ended his letters with "Yours in X's (Christ)", and he adopted much the same tone in correspondence with Gretchen Hood; collected in *Ich Kuss die Hand*. As Peter Dowell observes in his informative introduction to that volume, the constant joking, theellow inective about friends and enemies, and the incessant mooning of his own brain marked the private Mencken. If there was one, it was his humour, occasionally pulled tight enough to be usually at

Fortunes of an infanticide

Simon Karlinsky

CARYL EMERSON
Boris Godunov: Transposition of a Russian theme
272pp. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. \$25.
0 253 31230 2

Few events in modern history have appealed to the imagination of so many poets and playwrights of diverse literary traditions as the overthrow in 1605 of Boris Godunov, a monarch with dubious claims to the Russian throne, by a pretender of lowly birth known to history as the False Dmitry. The pretender claimed to be the youngest son of Ivan the Terrible, miraculously saved from the assassins sent by Boris to kill him fourteen years earlier.

Within a decade after the events in Moscow, there appeared in Spain Lope de Vega's play *El Gran Duque de Moscovia*, based on a somewhat distorted account of the defeat of Boris and the False Dmitry's short-lived triumph (he was deposed and put to death eleven months after his coronation). An even more distorted but still recognizable version reached England by 1618 in John Fletcher's play *The Loyal Subject*, as was demonstrated by Ervin C. Brody in his comprehensive study of the subject, *The Demetrius Legend and Its Literary Treatment in the Age of the Baroque*. Published in 1972, Brody's book, despite its title, also described the later treatments of the Boris Godunov and False Dmitry theme by German and Russian playwrights of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries (including its inexplicable popularity during the National Socialist period, when four dramas in German about the False Dmitry appeared in 1937 alone). This book supplemented and augmented the fundamental study published in the Soviet Union in 1936 by the noted Pushkin scholar Mikhail Alexeyev, who also examined the dramas, novels, poems and harlequinades the subject

inspired in England, France and Italy.

Since about the middle of the nineteenth century, historians have repeatedly demonstrated that the responsibility of Boris Godunov for the accidental death of the young Tsarevich Dmitry in 1591 was a legend deliberately kept alive by Russian chroniclers to curry favour with the tsars who reigned over the overthrow of the False Dmitry. The aim of this eschewed to discredit in the eyes of posterity the two upstart monarchs: Boris Godunov, who did not belong to any of the Russian princely houses of ancient lineage, came to rule first as the regent during the reign of Tsar Fyodor (the feeble-minded second son of Ivan the Terrible and the husband of Godunov's sister) and was elected to be tsar after Fyodor's death; and the False Dmitry, who impersonated the prince supposedly murdered as a child on Godunov's orders.

For about a century now, no responsible historian has believed that the real Dmitry was killed instead of falling accidentally on his own dagger during an epileptic seizure, which is what sources dating from the time of his death show. Yet, in theatres and open-air houses all over the world audiences watch the guilt-ridden Tsar Boris agonizing over the failures of his reign and the misfortunes visited upon his family and his people in retribution for the murder of an innocent child that had enabled him to attain the throne. This is the situation depicted in two major nineteenth-century works, Alexander Pushkin's neo-Shakespearean tragedy (1825) and Modest Musorgsky's Dostoevskian opera (two different versions, 1869 and 1874). The opera was based in part on Pushkin's play, but the ultimate source for both the poet and the composer was the tenth volume of the monumental *History of the Russian State* by Nikolai Korazin (1766-1826).

Caryl Emerson's book is an interdisciplinary and intergeneric study of ways in which the work of a historian is transposed into a work of literature and what happens when history and literature are adapted for the operatic stage.

The author herself negotiates, with assurance and elegance, passages from one branch of scholarship to another, being equally sure-footed as a student of history, of literature and of music. The dominant presence in her book is neither the historical Boris Godunov, nor Karamzin, Pushkin or Musorgsky, though the last three are allotted a robust chapter each. It is instead Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), the philosopher, linguist and literary scholar whose rapidly growing posthumous popularity in the English-speaking countries was attested in 1984 by the appearance of the excellent study of his life and ideas, *Mikhail Bakhtin* by Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist.

Caryl Emerson is one of Bakhtin's principal standard-bearers and popularizers in English. She has translated and edited his influential *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (first published in Russian in 1929) and is also the co-translator (together with Michael Holquist) of *The Dialogic Imagination*, a collection of four Bakhtin essays. For a number of years now, two Bakhtinian concepts have been in common use among teachers of Russian literature: the polyphonic novel (as in the novels of Dostoevsky, where the views of several characters are given equal weight and validity); and carnivalization, a special form of comedy that occurs when the powerful and powerless characters switch roles, as they did in carnival celebrations and also in novels by Robbe-Grillet and Dostoevsky.

These concepts have now moved to fields other than Russian literature and so have two others which are basic to Emerson's new book on Boris Godunov. Central to her approach are Bakhtinian "dialogism" (an artist who creates a work on a theme familiar to the audience is engaging in a dialogue with the artist who used this theme earlier); and "chronotope", a term Bakhtin found in Einstein's relativity theory and applied to literature to indicate that a literary work reflects the notions of time and space that are current in the period in which the writer lived. Chronotope was postulated by Bakhtin in his essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel", a study of the Greek and Roman romances of the early Christian centuries. Emerson uses it as her main tool for investigating the transition of the theme of Boris and False Dmitry from one medium to another. "Chronotopes can never be abstract", Emerson explains. "Therefore every chronotope inevitably contains an evaluation . . . inevitably delimits and individualizes the perspective from which the story is told. It constitutes a justification for the unadvised causality that joins a series of events into a plausible narrative."

Her most cogent examples are found in the chapter on Karamzin. Before his career as a historian, Nikolai Karamzin was a much-admired writer of sentimental fiction. His transition from the fictional to the historical mode of narration began, according to Emerson, in 1802, with a brief essay, "Historical Reminiscences and Observations on the Way to the Trinity [St Sergius Monastery]", in which there is a portrait of Boris Godunov as an enlightened monarch who did a great deal of good for his country. Yet, some two decades later, in the tenth volume of his *History*, which served as the main source for both Pushkin's and Musorgsky's works, Karamzin showed Boris as a guilt-ridden murderer.

Two historical developments occurred that changed Karamzin's idea of Godunov in the intervening years. In 1812, Russia was ravaged by the invasion of Napoleon, another parvenu monarch with no dynastic claims to support his right to the throne. Also, in an age when Shakespeare was regarded in both France and Russia as unsuitable for the stage and had to be performed in simplified and "regularized" neoclassical adaptations by Jean François Ducis, Karamzin was a long-time champion of the Bard in his original form. Back in 1787, Karamzin translated *Julius Caesar* from the English original and not from the French of Ducis, as was the custom at the time. Regarded as a willful eccentricity in the 1780s, Karamzin's view that Shakespeare's plays did not need amending with came to be generally accepted in Russia by the 1820s. As Emerson rightly points out, Godunov, the usurper of Karamzin's *History*, beats a strong likeness to Napoleon and of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Richard III.

Pushkin, as Emerson sees it, "drew on particular incidents in Karamzin's *History* and entered into a complex dialogue with the whole". It was a case of a poet of the Romantic age rethinking the historical account permeated with the sentimentalist outlook of Karamzin. Even though there is a section headed "The Shakespeare Connection" in the Pushkin chapter, Emerson underestimates the significance of Pushkin's self-proclaimed intention to sacrifice on the altar of "our father Shakespeare" the neoclassical unities and poetics in which Pushkin had been brought up. The discussion of the neoclassical views on translation and adaptation of foreign plays is handicapped by Emerson's failure (and that of the sources he cites) to realize that the tragedy *Dmitry the Pretender* by Pushkin's eighteenth-century predecessor Alexander Sumarokov and Sumarokov's emulated version of *Hamlet* were conversions of the chronicle accounts and of Shakespeare into Sumarokov's admitted neoclassical models, *Le Cid* by Corneille and *Britannicus* by Racine.

The chapter on Musorgsky is perhaps the richest in the book. Drawing on the recent ground-breaking studies of the operatic Boris by Robert William Oldani and Richard Tanguin, Emerson finds that the difference between the 1869 and 1874 versions can best be explained by Musorgsky's evolving concept of what an opera can be, by his withdrawal from Pushkin's model of Boris (to that of Karamzin) and by the fact that this music was composed in the age of Dostoevsky rather than that of Pushkin. All these things account for the opera's revisions, rather than the usually cited pressures of government censorship and of the operatic conventions of the time. This chapter also contains an extended and illuminating discussion of the operatic libretto as literature and its relationship to drama and prose fiction.

There are some problems in the transcribing and translating of Russian names and texts. The Russian word for Trinity, *Troitsa*, appears throughout in its dative case form, *Troitsu*, because that is how it occurred in the title of Karamzin's essay. The adjective *tsarskii* has existed for centuries in Russian with the meaning of "royal". It is wrong to equate it, as Emerson does repeatedly, with "tsarist" (Pushkin's Marina speaks to the False Dmitry about "your tsarist word alone" and we also read of Boris Godunov's "tsarist dignity"). "Tsarist" and its related noun "tsarism" entered Russian usage after the October Revolution, with the meaning of "autocratic" or "despotic". This is the meaning with which it was absorbed into English. It isn't a synonym for "royal" and couldn't have been used in the seventeenth century. Pushkin's chronicle Plimen was sent to the town of Uglich "to perform a certain penance" (*posluzhanie*), which Emerson reads as "sent . . . on a vague mission".

The worst single lapse occurs in the discussion of Pushkin's dedication of *Boris Godunov* to the memory of Nikolai Karamzin. The play was dedicated to Karamzin because "it was inspired by his genius". Caryl Emerson reproduces a garbled version of this dedication from a two-volume collection of Russian plays in English translation, which first appeared in 1961. In that version, the translator confused the two Russian equivalents of "his", *ego* and the self-referential *svoi*, which must pertain to the subject of the sentence. So his translation began: "Alexander Pushkin, inspired by his genius, dedicates this work, etc". Instead of eulogizing Karamzin, this translation makes Pushkin brag of being inspired by his own genius. Small wonder that Emerson could see this dedication as some kind of parody.

Such blemishes do not diminish the fact that this is an engrossing, many-layered and rewarding book.

Russian Literature of the Twenties: An anthology, edited by Carl R. Proffer, Eljendro Proffer, Ronald Meyer and Mary Ann Sponner. (566pp. Ann Arbor, Michigan: 1986. \$39.50. ISBN 0-88223-820-X) Includes poems by Tsvetaeva, Pasternak, Esenin, Mayakovsky and Khlebnikov, together with a substantial selection from the prose-writing of the period. Includes Pushkin's novel *We*, "The Fatal Egg" by Mikhail Bulgakov and "Armoured Train 69" by Vsevolod Ivanov, and pieces by many others: Babel, Plavov, and Zolotarev.

Picture, if you will . . .

Tony Tanner

PAT ROGERS (Editor)
The Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature
528pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £17.50.
0 192812816 9

There is something disarming, ingratiating even, about a title which offers an "illustrated" history of English literature. Along with the promise of pictures and all the attendant relief from the ordeals of print which they guarantee, there is the tacit reassurance that the good-natured unwary reader will not be meanly led into the unilluminated deserts of literary theory or to the exacting high plateau of rigorous intellectual or demanding argument. It will, surely, be rather like the picture on the cover, "The Travellers' Breakfast", with Wordsworth and his circle having a jolly - jollyish, Wordsworth is a touch severe - breakfast at an inn. There's old Coleridge - he looks jolly enough - holding a boiled egg in his right hand, while Southey is, well, almost leering at the tolerably pretty girl pouring the tea at a distance of about eighteen inches. An amiable, family affair, as English as can be. That is the sort of atmosphere suggested by the title and to a large extent that is what the book delivers.

I'm not sure what the options are. How, after all, do you illustrate a history of literature? With a history of, say, trains, the question would not arise. But literature? The scope is either somewhat aridly narrow - reproductions of a few hundred frontispieces, perhaps - or it is so vast as to be boundless: portraits of the author, his family, his dog, his desk, street, local church, neighbourhood pond (one of the measured ones), fellow writers, etc. Or then again, perhaps some contemporary tomb sculpture which a writer of the time may, or may not, have seen; or pictures of the reigning monarch; a train (the industrial revolution); a painting of a machine-gun (First World War); miners glumly going to work (the Thirties); a still of Laurence Olivier as Henry V (Shakespeare); an eighth-century coin showing Offa, King of All England (Geoffrey Hill); or perhaps a painting called "The Drawing Room" showing a young lady reading in front of a fire in an enviably elegant circumstances watched by a small, amiable dog which occupies the couch opposite - as the back cover of the book so prettily and restfully offers. (The presence of that indolent hound is something of an unintended felicity, or irony, since the text concludes with Martin Dodsworth's stirring reassurance - "there is life in the old dog of English literature yet"). My point, admittedly opaque and ungrateful one, is simply that there are no useful guide-lines either for inclusion or exclusion in such a volume. Apart from a few musings like a picture of Coleridge holding a

boiled egg, there is hardly more reason for selecting an illustration of this than for omitting an illustration of that.

One legitimate question about *The Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature* would be, to what extent are the illustrations "adjunctive and incremental" (if I may borrow Faulkner formulation) to the written text? And with this in mind I will attempt to give some idea of the pictures on offer for the various periods. While reading lucid summaries of *Beowulf*, "The Battle of Maldon", "The Seafarer" and so on, we can look at the Ruthwell Cross, an eighth-century Anglo-Saxon helmet, some of the Sutton Hoo treasures. An attempt to relate picture to text - and such attempts are rare in the book - is made by suggesting that the formal complexity of *Pearl* is somewhat "analogous to the funerary monuments of the time" and there is a photograph of a late-medieval tomb in an unspecified church (the provenance of the illustrations is sometimes precise and sometimes vague). This is valid enough, but as an attempt to suggest some sort of medieval *névralgie* inferable from writing and sculpture, it is the most tentative and unpursued of propositions.

Contemporary illustrations of Chaucer's pilgrims from the Ellesmere manuscript are lovely and it is pleasant to see the small portrait of Chaucer himself painted in Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*. The Tudor period is inevitably illustrated with portraits of Elizabeth, Elizabethan courtiers and ladies, and New World savages. A Veronese painting of Venus and Adonis is intelligently included as a reminder of the cultural loss incurred by England when it isolated itself from Catholic Europe. Few Protestant English people would have seen the great works of the Italian masters. A needlework illustration of the Actaeon and Diana episode from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* serves as a reminder of how absolutely central and generative that work was for the Renaissance. (It is also a work which is referred to in every chapter of the book until the Victorian period. It resurfaces in the epigraph to Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist* and could fairly be considered to be the single most influential foreign work on English literature.) There are some pictures of title-pages in the Shakespeare chapter but the numerous paintings, engravings, photographs, stills of various scenes and versions and performances - up to Derek Jacobi in *The Tempest* - seem to me to belong in another sort of history altogether. Title-pages of Bacon's *Instauratio Magna*, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Vaughan's *Silva Silvillana* - are more fruitfully deployed in the section on the seventeenth century, as are illustrations from Emblem books. And you can't go wrong with Blake's illustrations to Milton, though, here again, this hardly increases our awareness of the seventeenth-century imagination at work.

The "Restoration and the Eighteenth Century" chapter opens appropriately enough with

a Hogarth depiction of a riotous London populace before moving on to the more peaceful moralities of Stubbins and the romantic mountains of Richard Wilson. Reynolds's powerful portrait of Dr Johnson is an obvious and appropriate choice. More interesting, perhaps, are the contemporary drawings of Vauxhall, which features in so many novels and plays, and the newly fashionable Bloomsbury Square, complete with Palladian buildings and two cows and a cowherd. Paintings - by Constable, Turner, John Mortin, Blake - understandably dominate the "Romanticism" section, while a fierce Gifford cartoon of Jacobins at the execution of Louis XVI serves as a reminder of the political dimension of Romanticism. With the Victorians we get pictures of industrial life, Pre-Raphaelite dreams, realistic domestic interiors where domestic tragedies are enacted (Frith), while for 1880-1930 we are shown Beardsley and Wilde (decadence), a book cover of a Henty novel and a photograph of a "banquet for Ranjit Nawanagar" (imperialism), and some realistic paintings of the rural poor by Sir George Clausen which "recall" Hardy. A splendid Max Beerholm of Henry James conversing with Joseph Conrad is a nice reminder that the two great novelists, who effectively transformed the Victorian novel into the Modern, settled and worked in England in this period. From now on the great English literature will no longer be written by English people: the Americans and Irish effectively dominate. English literature - with the arguable exception of Lawrence and Forster and some of the poets like Auden - becomes fairly resolutely parochial. And, I think, remains so.

I would be surprised if many people read this book, and indeed it is hard to imagine for what kind of audience it was written. Pat Rogers is named as editor but, after a short foreword in which he mentions the recovery of literary history and alludes to some of the problems involved in periodization and canon formation, he disappears and leaves the rest of the job to his nine contributors. I don't blame him. It must have been an ungrateful task: writing not for academics, not for theorists (certainly not), not - not exactly - for the backward, the illiterate, the hopelessly culturally deprived, but for some notional contemporary gentle (very gentle) reader, of indeterminate education, unascertainable intelligence, uncolleable sophistication, unknowable requirements and invisible profile. The result, for the most part, is a monument of inert orthodoxy and flaccid conventionality. The contributors are all serious and responsible scholars and critics of varying degrees of distinction. There is nothing here that is ignorant, dotty, lazy or perverse. But, with the exception of John Pitcher on Tudor literature and Andrew Sanders on High Victorian literature, it is for the most part numbingly commonplace, or class-roomy basic.

J. A. Burrow does his duty by Old and Middle English and conveys something of the amazing freshness and originality of Chaucer and his extraordinary mastery of tones and narrative strategies. Indeed, he sees him as something of an early Henry James on account of his "disavowals" and "familiarizing gaps" ("I rede it naught, therefore I late it go on"). John Pitcher writes about Tudor literature with vivacity and contagious urgency in what is by

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John Loftis

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A crutch in the crotch

John Melmoth

PAUL BRYERS
Coming First
240pp. Bloomsbury. £10.95.
0 7475 0000 2

Until the recent election, Alliance politicians were rumoured to make good lovers because they made such a practice of coming second. Preston Moody's smarmy exercises in "guilt and obligation" are a similarly unsuccessful attempt to base a career on a technique which might, after all, prove nothing more than remoteness and detachment. The mule lend in Paul Bryers's novel is a "born-again feminist", bent on re-making himself in the image of the New Man: "something between a cuddly left version of Dr. Spock and the later-day John Lennon, deep into home-baked bread and domestic bliss". Alas, the church responses of the women in his life to his putative solidarity fuel the suspicion that they would have preferred Oliver Reel. Polly, Carla, Miranda, Christobel et al appear ready to trade Preston's ideologically sound wishfulness for a helping of egotistical machism.

It is one thing to acknowledge that coming first has little to do with coming across, up with the glands or clean and nothing to do with coming together; quite another to make a success of coming afterwards. In both his professional and private lives, Preston is inclined to see himself as the victim of his own considerateness. A producer at the BBC, he is understandably sensitive to the view that his *Shrews in Ten* serves to bridge a gap between the women's movement and pet-care. His wife, who finds his preoccupation with her orgasm unrelaxing, has banished him to the sofa because of his affair with the presenter of *Shrews*, who regards penetration as the crassest form of genital imperialism. The natural childbirth classes which he attends with his wife's best friend, whom he has been required to impregnate, are little more than ritual humiliations of the attendant males. The discovery that he has warts on his penis and is, therefore, a potential cause of cervical cancer, is just about the limit.

Beneath all the yuppie self-deprecation, *Coming First* is profoundly gynophobic, in the English tradition which has given the world jokes about mothers-in-law and the menopause, and Kingsley Amis's thesis that all women are mad. Media harpies and domestic termites are alike "ferce" and "mean", inclined to wear dangerous high heels. They not only threaten Preston physically - his wife kicks him and elips him round the ear - they also truss him up in double-blinds. On the one hand they treat him like a child ("eat your lentil pasty like a good boy"), on the other they

ridicule him for his childishness. The woman doctor who paints his warts cones within an inch, as it were, of completing this project of psychological emasculation.

In the end, Preston has to come to terms with the fact that he doesn't much like his wife and mistress and that the gynocrats are out to do him down socially as well as psychologically. Feminists, he concludes, are after the same slice of the cake as aspiring working-class lads like himself, only they do not fight fair: "They used crutches, and if they didn't trip you up with them they put them between your legs and brought them up sharp."

Paul Bryers's first departure from the political thriller (although there is a thriller element here) is genuinely funny, if at times too reliant on Preston's doing silly things to and with his willy for reasons that are too complex to go into in a review. Preston's sense of his own irrelevance and marginality contrives to be both implausible and moving. Most people cannot imagine their parents having sex; he feels the same way about himself. Nor is Bryers restrained by received notions of good taste; jokes about thrush are capped by a comic set-piece centred on a messy caesarian section, in the course of which another infant girl is brought mewling and bawling into the struggle.

Tough but fooled

Jill Neville

NINA BAWDEN
Circles of Deceit
184pp. Macmillan. £9.95.
0 333 44664 4

"About suffering they were never wrong, the Old Masters . . .". In Breugel's "Fall of Icarus" for instance [reproduced on the cover of Nina Bawden's new novel], the drowning boy is but a detail on the crowded canvas. Similarly, in *Circles of Deceit*, the descent of Tim, the narrator's schizophrenic son, takes its humble position in his hectic life. Bawden's skill is to convey the intensity of the pain this causes, even though there is no breast-beating, even though it is not fully focused on.

The narrator is a painter who specializes in copying old masters, but who always leaves a tiny clue on each picture, a kind of signature of his own. He has a living to make; two wives, children and a mother to support; professional intrigues to contend with. He claims to be "susceptible to, bullied and badgered by women", but he is simply fooled by them. The second wife, Clio, is a vile child-bride appealing first to his lust then to his pity, neglecting, even beating her own child. The first wife, beloved Helen, commits adultery and makes him feel

fine dissection of the forced intimacy which arises between nurse and patient, described in prose that is sharp and pungent. The novel speaks powerfully of the desire to give and receive love: a love that is safe, protected by professional status, gowns and rubber gloves, a love that can be withdrawn at the end of the shift. It also explores other aspects of nursing: the world of the ageing ward sisters, striving to perfect small and ridiculous details of cleanliness and order to please the lordly consultants who sweep through the hospital without noting the painful yet tender efforts made to gain their approval. The young nurses play the same game, respecting the doctors' maleness, their professional superiority. Ferguson is sharply aware of the nurse's burden - to be ever the onlooker while the patients act out their agonies of suffering and recovery and the medical staff, despite their pity and involvement, remain irrevocably separate.

Indefinite Nights is divided into a series of short sections each dealing with widely different aspects of the nurse's world, each with its own special strengths. The novel is robustly written and intelligently directed; the enormous forces of life and death never succeed in slackening Ferguson's control of the narrative. She is a writer of considerable gifts, and *Indefinite Nights* marks a bold development in them.

Long ligger

Andrew Hislop

RUPERT THOMSON
Dreams of Leaving
435pp. Bloomsbury. £12.95.
0 7475 0023 1

"Exhibits a wonderfully dry sense of humour throughout", declares the TLS in Rupert Thomson's first novel. The acclamation is premature, since both the book in question, *The Bath - A Definitive Study*, and the review are fantasies of Moses Highness, the hero of *Dreams of Leaving*, conceived as he recovers consciousness in a luxurious Hampstead bathroom during a party. In his book Thomson also exhibits a wonderfully dry sense of humour - if not throughout. Unfortunately, he also exhibits a number of other things. *Dreams of Leaving* is by turns brilliant, muddled, perceptive, pretentious, lyrical, boring, dry, earthy, too long and incomplete. (Bloomsbury are to be admired in that they have not cut it down to a presentably modest volume which can be quickly classed as "promising".) It is less certain how much they should be thanked.)

At the heart of the novel is another tale of urban disaffection, featuring the fag-end of the "me generation" - wedged so uneasily between

guilty about it. "Womanly wiles" it used to be called, and it is bracing to read a somewhat misogynist novel written by a woman. The narrator conveys masculinity of the tough, gruff kind, while reminding us he is not a professional novelist. That he nevertheless writes with sophistication is one of the treps of this particular authorial ploy. But he is plausibly painterly in his way of seeing: "Helen's hair caught fire in a shaft of sun from the window. . . . She had flushed her egg and was crushing the shell in its cup with her thumb." This is the moment when Helen tells him she has had a lover for ages.

However test the circles of deceit whirl about the narrator, the important concerns are his two sons, the beaten step-child and the schizophrenic Tim. A formidable eunt figures largely, and there is a dark secret in the mother's past. A crowded canvas indeed; perhaps too crowded. The perspective is impeccable, but with more space, air, light, shadow and background (I wanted to know much more about Tim) this terse, interesting construct would have been more compelling.

Sturdy distractions

Lindsay Duguid

GEORGINA HAMMICK
People for Lunch
191pp. Methuen. £9.95.
0 413 14900 5

Georgina Hemmick's stories are cool, clever and bitter. Traditional in range, they tend to focus on middle-class sensibilities as they cope with the commonplace horrors of bereavement, illness and death. As Mrs Nightingale, a woman expecting lunch guests, torn between impatience and grief, recalls telling her son, "The world has always been a terrible place, we just know more about it now because of the media. Horror used to be more local."

To give the flavour of this former local unpleasantness, Hammick bones in on detail, picking on the distracting complaint which signals tragedy: Mrs Nightingale, on the anniversary of her husband's death, is freight with domestic arrangements, her attention caught by the day's smags: dog hairs, broken spectacles, empty log baskets. In "Grist", Bob's mourning recollections of Aunt are as much a matter of "morbidity every four hours" and pots of soup in the freezer as memories of a person; in some stories the distracting object becomes a weighty symbol: Noah's ark stands for childhood innocence in "Bad Taste"; sweet wine split in the heat by the patronizing local gentry in "Noble Rot"; Indiscretions.

Perhaps because they have to bear this symbolic load, Hammick's plots tend to be of a

hippie idealism and yuppie plutocracy. Scowls are again at play, drugged, drunk, without collective vision, but not without ethereal aspirations or mannered sensibilities. Thus we have Highness by name, highness by nature (Moses is six feet six inches) and yet more highness by the constant intake of powders, grasses, beer, wine and spirits. Not surprisingly, the delights of the flesh come artificially flavoured: "He tasted wine and through the wine he tasted her" or "I just tasted it [speed]. On the end of your nose." "The Turkish delight of her nipples", however, seems to be figurative.

Superficially, we are in Martin Amis-land, sometimes literally so, in Westbourne Grove dives such as the Blue Sky Café. But Thomson's approach to the tawdry squelch of this world is very different. Amis entices even puffed dissenters with his turn of phrase, the "spin" of his sentences; his readers are taken on a linguistic roller-coaster through the mine before the world is unmasked, in some sub-Nebokovian textual implosion, as a fictional game. Thomson, however, begins outside the city with what is ostensibly a fictional game: one which undermines the cliché of the imploding ellentation of urban existence. *Dreams of Leaving* opens in a rural village called Nes Egypt whose inhabitants are imprisoned for life by a collection of comically named, ploddingly pharaonic policemen led by Inspector Peech. Ferocious escape plots fail (one man disguises himself as a ploughed field) but baby Moses - you've guessed it - is bull-rushed to freedom down the river. Cut to 1980s London with authentic detail, the fencible black face replaced by the more measured satire of urban reportage as we follow Moses, now in his twenties, legging it and liggering it through his *déjà-vu* monde.

Thomson in town often writes well, at times very well, but without the verbal pyrotechnics of Amis. The perception is less savage, occasionally even maddening, and though the wit can be sharp, some of the befuddled *apertures* seem intended to be taken seriously. Some irritatingly extended passages appear to have only the tedium of lived experience to justify them. All the time, though, there is the expectation of some brilliant fictional trick which will link the two worlds. Alas, the link, when Moses returns to his roots, turns out to be a mundane, sorry affair which suspends humour as well as disbelief. We are left wondering whether Thomson, like Highness, "in this village found himself approaching the limits of his imagination".

sturdy, traditional nature. This gives the collection an old-fashioned feel. Both "Mod About the Boy", which describes a schoolboy obsession with Noël Coward, and "Tales from the Spere Room", which evokes life with Grendmother in bygone Southport ("The meids' sitting-room smells of smoke and nappits"), could have come from Angus Wilson in the 1960s; while "Deathcap" is a skilful but rather empty exercise in surprise ending which turns on trains to Lyme Regis and cliff-top welks much in the manner of Agatha Christie. In "The Tulip Plete" the central shock is revealed against a background of wet dogs, camel coats and tea cakes.

It is remarkable that the strongest, most compelling story in the book has none of this genteel atmosphere. "A Few Problems in the Day Case Unit", a disconcertingly precise account of the routine humiliations of gynaeological examination, manages to suggest ordinary life as well as revealing a truthful and amusing area of euphemism ("discomfort", "unplanned", "precautions"). This story remains resolutely dispassionate in tone, but it is by far the most sympathetic of the pieces here, and is the only one which breaks new ground. It ought to be required reading for all consultants in the field; could it be proved that such people read short stories?

Georgina Hemmick's carefully worked style is ideally suited to the delineation of cracks in apparently secure lives. Her close-up view can, however, lack perspective, and in the end she has a sense that human suffering approaches no grander scale than dyed hair, nostalgia and class distinctions.

Finding a language for loss

Jay Parini

JOHN HOLLANDER
In Time and Place
103pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £12.95 (paperback, £7.95).
0 8018 3392 2

"To imagine a language means to imagine a form of life", wrote John Hollander, paraphrasing Wittgenstein in an early poem, "Ninth of July". More than twenty years later, he is still hoping to find a language adequate to the forms of life. The difficult search for a medium to express "memory and pain" is, in fact, central to his latest volume, *In Time and Place*. An elegiac tone dominates this book, which begins with a sequence of thirty-four poems in the *In Memoriam* stanza. These interconnecting lyrics are exquisite and moving, superior to almost anything else Hollander has ever written. The fifth poem, "The Ruminants", is characteristic of the autumnal note that sounds throughout:

The pastures of remembering
Are over-grazed by now: the slow
Mute beasts of sorrow come and go
(Bare patches wait for some new spring).

Solemnly ruining the text
Of sad interiors and joys
In valleys blanketed from noise:
What page of our tale will go next?

In my high, dreaming car, I steer
Away, and here I wake to light:
Lashed with cold rains, the hills of night,
The shores of morning, washed with fear.

Selective affinities

Lachlan Mackinnon

ANN STEVENSON
Selected Poems 1956-1986
149pp. Oxford University Press. £10.95.
0 192 19737 7

In *Correspondences: A family history in letters* (1974) Anne Stevenson explored the gradual collapse of the Puritan ethic in America from 1829 to 1972. This is the only collection reproduced in full in her *Selected Poems*, and it needs to be read in full to be appreciated. Stevenson offers letters and newspaper reports of sufficient imaginative vigour to form a world, and in that sense the work is a considerable success. We cannot tell whether a veiled autobiography lies behind the later stages, for each character is realized from within: what weakens the work is technical inconsistency, the occasional use of William Carlos Williams's three-play line having no apparent dramatic or intentional effect.

Correspondences gives the effect of a powerful and self-distancing imagination. But this otherwise extremely inept selection makes

Misplaced and magical

Tim Dooley

ELAINE FEINSTEIN
Badlands
34pp. Hutchinson. £5.95.
0 09 165740 7

The poems in *Badlands*, Elaine Feinstein's first full collection since the appearance of her selected poems, *Some Unease & Angels*, in 1977, display a continuing interest in the misplaced or magical. Whether Feinstein is reinterpreting myth or observing details of contemporary life, it is the exiled and abandoned that draw her compassion, the quixotic and uncalled for that lead her to celebrate.

"Our thoughts once moved so easily together / like dolphins offshore to the landmass of the day", she writes in "A Letter from La Jolla", an affectionate recollection of an early love, which recalls how that which seems glamorous and free is often most at risk: being surprised by February when the sweet season here, when blue-sailed gruelers dance on their tails, at high tide on La Jolla sands, to make their

Hollander manages to sustain a fairly conversational tone within these tautly formal quatrains. At the same time, as in the last stanza above, he takes risks with a kind of lyricism rarely found in contemporary poetry - perhaps another nod to Tennyson, who seems to brood over this work as Mallarmé, Keats and the Metaphysicals brooded over early phases in the career of this prolific and always allusive poet.

No better defence of formal poetry has been written in recent years than "Footnote to One of These Notes", which begins with two questions:

Why rhyme? And why for this most late
And serious of texts: have I
Not saved such verse to jollify
Upbraid, goad, and commemorate?

A wittily phrased answer occurs five stanzas later: "We live *vers libre*, but come to die / In something like rhyme's final term." Hollander finds in writing itself an exact metaphor for living, and in *In Time and Place* he returns, repeatedly, to this conceit, allowing the metaphor to multiply and change shape. "Text", a favourite word of all loyal post-structuralists, recurs constantly as a metaphor for life, as in the poignant "After Blossoming", which concludes:

Spring is done, and I may have wept
Too much, but have outlasted it,
Constraining in the ruined writ
Of petals dropped, a promise kept.

The poet meditates on the loss of a loved one throughout *In Time and Place*, posing in various ways the premiss that "Absence is pre-

sence". There is something extremely affecting about the persona Hollander adopts here: that of the witty, almost excessively learned scholar-poet who calls up the language of thematic criticism to find a language equal to his pain. In "Vintage Absence", perhaps the high point of the book, the poet uses the metaphor of vintage wines to summon a vision of irrecoverable possibilities: "Each week I meditate upon / Dark bottles that have come and gone / To teach what realness can mean." Not ignoring the baleful opposites of "Patience and Lumping", which, as he says, "lay my cellar waste", he eventually finds some consolation in the metaphor of vintage "spirits" (pon, of course, intended):

My deeper spirits then must keep
(The higher luncies have been drained)
And some day what will have remained,
By moonlight sipped, will guard our sleep.

Prose poems make up the remaining two sections of the book, forming a kind of postlude to the initial sequence: an intriguing if unrealized attempt to come to grips with what Hollander, in a footnote, calls "life after verse". Full of aphoristic lines ("Every deed is a kiss of consciousness; every act is a black-out") and bright images ("the breaks in the clouds all glossed the statement of sheer distance"), they seem oddly irrelevant after the astonishing performance that precedes them. Like most prose poems, they offer the satisfaction of neither verse nor prose, and Hollander should probably have let the poetic sequence stand on its own. None the less, *In Time and Place* is a landmark in contemporary poetry.

success, success, success.

Her preference is to "Live with Real People", "pub people", to avoid "Habitat and snobbery and too damn much literary ambition": this echoes (in 1985) the sentimentality of 1969's "In Middle England", which wonders if a traveller thinks

Of the mournful
Decaners full of perfume or
Disinfectant? Of the roses,
The desolate neatness? The despair?

It was sentimentality, presumably, that was behind the inclusion of the fey "Willow Song" as Frances Horowitz's elegy, rather than the more concrete and moving "Red Rock Fault", which is omitted. A *Selected Poems* ought to convey the full range and flavour of a writer's work, but although the recent *The Fiction-Makers* (1985) is well represented the richer *Minute by Glass Minute* (1982) is not. The most astonishing omission of all is the sequence "Green Mountain, Black Mountain", whose outstanding last line, "Blackbirds are the cellos of the deep farms", is thoroughly earned by the whole. If selection means this kind of misrepresentation, it seems hardly worth doing.

Lines of this force remind us that Feinstein is the translator and biographer of Marina Tsvetayeva. Elsewhere in the volume, one is reminded of the links between her work and modern American poetry. The influence of the Black Mountain group, which was very noticeable in her earlier poems, now seems to be merely a matter of residual eccentricities of punctuation, only some of which have a creative function. Elizabeth Bishop's particularity of vision is a more lasting inheritance, and one Feinstein implicitly acknowledges in her memorial piece "Park Parade, Cambridge":

As a mild ghost, then, blink with me tonight
Under this plant roof out to where
The great oak lies, its foliage disguised
with flakes of light. Above us, clouds
in these wide skies remain as still as sandbars.

Feinstein praises the "friendly toughness" of Bishop's spirit and what is "not deceived" behind the "blue credulity" of Jean Rhys's gaze. The spirit which emerges from the poems in *Badlands* similarly combines both independence and generosity, an awareness of the costs and the joys involved in following an unexpected path.

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Remainders

Eric Korn

Memorial followers of this column perhaps recall that more than once I have displayed mild reproachfulness towards London's Underground system, drawing attention to such mild character blemishes as mendacity, *potyousclina* (hatred of the human race) and fustianal mania combined with a phobic distaste for mechanical means of transportation.

I am pleased to report a most admirable redemptive change.

I first caught sight of it last week, when I was strolling through twelve thousand others through one of those ingenious Venturi-effect constrictions that turn a broad-based surge into a seething trickle. I held out my ticket for inspection only to discover that the ticket collector had been made redundant. The sense that we were participating in a religious drama rather than an everyday economic activity made us all hold our breath high. I can tell you, and as I looked around with heightened awareness I saw a window marked EXCESS FARE. Who would argue with that? Since then I have observed these wickets at many progressive stations, and the estimable, public-spirited system has been explained to me.

"The way it works is this. If your journey has not been entirely free of untoward incident, present your ticket and a claim form, thus:

GOSPEL OAK to FARRINGTON.....70p
less
Down escalator kaput (four months now)10p
Expensive electronic signalling equipment signals
"TO DETERMINE WHETHER APPROACHING
TRAIN IS BOUND, ENQUIRE OF DRIVER" 5p
Offensive incivility on part of loudspeaker5-25p
Superabundance of little notices saying "Thinking of
getting out at West Clapham (or South Finchley or
Peckham)? You can't."6p
Station name plate replaced by cute rebus or puzzle-
picture indicating PECK + HAM, OX + FORD +
SIR + CUSS, BAIZE + WAR + TEAR etc10p
Enforced meditation between stations 2p per minute
Up escalator kaput20p
Ditto with enforced use of unattractive spiral stairs
50p

Join down a total and present the claim at the
EXCESS FARE window; the smiling refund-
ombudsperson will do the rest.

I take misprints for inspiration the way others
might take acid: every so often one comes
along and kicks a hole through the doors of
perception.

News on Sunday did that once in its short life
when it described a movie as cliché-ridden.
The word defies analysis somehow, looking
not so much exotic as extragalactic. But the
mind abhors a vacuum, and keeps starting false
trails of reminiscence, pseudomadeleines.
Cliché and Klusholmen, twin sandy islets near
Helligoland, where dauntlessly debonair
yachtsmen had a close call when they stumbled
on the invasion plans of the Imperial German
Navy, where Biggles and Glinger pancaked in a
Bristol Bulldog, in Weimar days entirely given
over to avocets and naturism, whence Isher-
wood's *Letters from Klusholmen*, printed on
Spender's hand-press, after Faber, turned it
down, "of legendary rarity" according to bibli-
ographers, projected locale of Eliot's fifth
quartet, of which only the epigraph survives
("Cliche: smallest of the North Frisians.
Sailors' tales speak of the bell of St Radegund,
priores of a convent of Minorite nuns, now
disseminated, dissolved, ruinous and sub-
merged"). Quiet Days in Cliché.

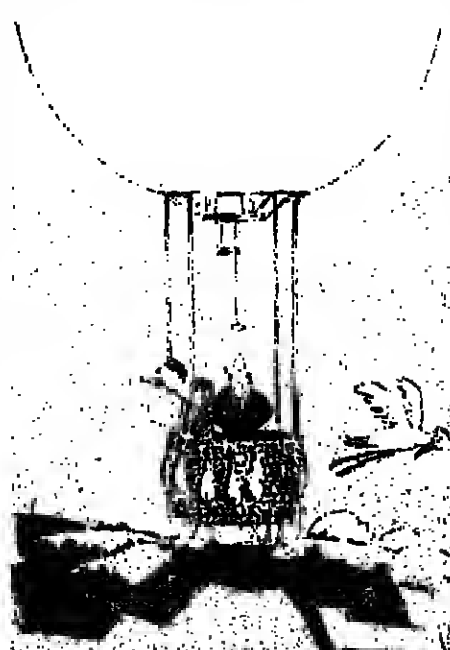
Trying to make a telephone call to
0800-something-something-something, a right
diligible company near Epsom, I was re-
warded by the randomizing godlets of British
Telecom with repeated messages from the
speaking clock (which is 123): "At the third
stroke, the time, sponsored by Accurist (TM)
will be..." (The TM is silent; compare
Flousman's "Is my TM ploughing that I was wont
to drive?")

But handing over time itself for private
sponsorship seems hubristic who are these
watchmakers; that they dare to pat Father

Time on the head? I see them all as pinched,
humorous, snuff-taking pamphleteers in skull-
caps and pince-nez; the last tradition of
freethinking. Paley's watch no mystery to
them, and the radical craftsman of Clerkenwell
were ever a danger to the establishment. But
they presume on their Cartesian forebears, on
Leibniz and Huygens and Einstein, if they
think that Time runs to the tune of their twee-
zers. Just imagine: Time Present and Time Past
are both perhaps present in Time Sponsored
and no longer undecidable; Chronicles of
Wasted Time-sponsored-by-Accurist; a rose-
red city half as old as Accurist (the rose-red city
is probably sponsored by Clifton Nurseries);
time (sponsored by Accurist) held me green
and dying (sponsored by Sketchley); Burberry
brings you the weather. Townsend-Thorsen
owns the sound of surf, and a mattress com-
pany, perhaps the enticingly named Foutons, is
bringing you the moon.

Time hath a wallet at his back full of crisp
brown tenners for British Telecom. Deprived
from me ye Accurist into the everlasting wrong
connection.

For years I lovingly handcrafted and polished
an impracticable pun about the New Hebrides,
(which were a joint colony of England and
France, using old fives, old pence, and cow-
ries - or was it millions - with equal fluency),
the denouement of which was to be "Answer.
Because they have an Anglo-French Condomi-
nium."



A detail from one of the drawings in Russell Jones's
101 Uses of a Condom (unpublished pp. Crab Street,
£2.95, 094887127).

The subject once unlovable, I mean un-
handable, I mean undiscussable, is now banal.
The launch, if that is what I should call it, of the
Virgin contraceptive has placed the coping
stone of popmarket on the hastily built edifice
of respectability that endorses the subject of the
sheath; even though Branson's commemora-
tive gesture (would you buy a burst balloon
from this man?) may be judged ill-judged.

For me, alas, it comes too late.
We can now all speak our minds freely on the
subject, but the Republic of Vanuatu has long
since gained its no doubt richly merited inde-
pendence, the New Hebrides ceased to exist,
and the cheering citizens little thought, as they
danced in the flag-decked streets of Honiara,
that a man's life work lay in ruins.

Not all the book-fairs and all the auctions in the
world can bring me a volume that conveys
more rapture than my small octavo *Canadian
Pacific Railway List of Designating Numbers of
Stations* (1st September 1913). Destroy all
previous lists. They did, that is why it is so
rare.

What we have here, or rather what I happily
have here, and what you are not going to get
your sacrificial hands on, is a magical epic of
found poetry 9,950 stations long; every station
a melody, together a rosary of names; the
litanies of the Stations of the cross; Canada
expressed and the chugging locos from Halifax
by way of Beaver Bank, Fenerty's Siding,

Hibbitts, Duffys, Tuckers and Stillwater (he
lendeth me beside the Still water to Sissiboo,
Sigogne and Hectanooga) by way of Basque,
Sapsim and Toketic, by Spuzzum, Saddle
Rock, Yale, Choate and Hope; clear to Port
Moody, Crabs, and Vancouver. (Not Port
Moody Crabs, which would be more than the
human frame could bear.)

The blending of Romance and Cree, of
Saxon and Salish, of Latin and Na-Dene, is
inexpressibly poignant. Mazeppa and Melgund
and Medora; Matsqui, Malakwa and Medunk-
ieunk. The voices of desolation - Fort Steele,
Wasa, Skookumschuck - blend with the cries
of commerce - North Star Ballast Pit, Cran-
brook Sash and Dour Co. Alice Broughton
Mining Co. What a story could be gleaned
from sequences like Payne Spur, Monitor
Spur, Three Forks and Alamo Concentrator;
what an astonishing new verse form is adum-
brated by nos 3,604 to 3,609: Hawkins,
Bellamy, Canadian Coupage Co Siding,
Jelly, Bell, Yule.

In the Kenora Subdivision they commemo-
rate Telford and Rennie, Darwin and
Whitemouth Shelley, a lovely epithet: near
Chuk River they speak mockingly (Malloeks)
of the Dominion Explosive Coy. And explo-
sive and coy the Dominion may be by turns,
Furget Stoughton Holdfast Liberty (Sask);
Ridoni Kinogram Tophet Nemegos (Ont);
Gantier, Pettapiece, Floors. Forget Payne's
Spur, the Pettapiece that creeps from day to
day; listen again to the sound of the last end:
Bellamy
Jelly
Bell
Yule.

But the way forward is the way back and the
midnight of winter brings renewal: Yule, Bell,
Jelly, Bellamy - a merry sequence indeed. It
would be a bold traveller who bought a day
return.

The incomparable open-handedness of my
West Coast readers incites them to send me
eccentric cookbooks, Dodgsonian dictionar-
ies, erotic moveables (a tonic for the jaded)
and postcards with haiku or epigrams. And
one, anxious for my social well-being, has sent
me an Edwardian (or perhaps early Georgian)
manual of behaviour with the uncompromising
and programmatic title *DON'T*. Incised on
granite, it offers the ten commandments of
comme il faut or *comme il faut pas*, a catalogue
of disapproval, more like a hectoring actual-
ity, but I prefer alliteration to precision. ("So
did the Anglosaxons", observes my speaking
dog, Derrida, a ferocious Pinscher, "and look
where they are now." As well as Derrida,
whom I may have omitted to mention pre-
viously, I keep a pair of white mice called Levi
and Strauss. Strauss, as you might expect, is
a walking mouse, a raro mutant with a bizarre
behaviour pattern, but there is nothing wrong

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 338
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the
three quotations which follow and to send us the
answers so that they reach this office not later than
August 7. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct
set of answers opened on that date, or failing that,
the most nearly correct - in which case implied
guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 338" on the
envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The
Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's
Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results
will appear on August 14.

1 The stable-boys thud by
Their horses' dinging divots at the sky
And with bright hooves
Printing the sodden turf with lucky grooves.

2 I was a poor groom of the stable, king,
When thou wert king; who, travelling towards York,
With much ado at length have gotten leave
To look upon my sometimes royal master's face.
O, how I yearn'd my heart, when I beheld
In London streets, that coronation-day,
When Bolingbroke rode on rosy Barbary,
That horse that thou so often hast bestrid,
That horse that I so carefully have dress'd!

3 Almsdeaken, their names live; they
Have slipped their names, and stand at ease,
Or gallop for what must be joy,
And not a fiddling stay them home.
Or curious eye-watch propitiates

with Levi's genes.)

I have wandered from the point.

DON'T is a comprehensive protocol of
prohibitions by a writer who rejoices in the
pseudonym of Censor, as Elia rejoiced in the
Lamb.

DON'T is revised and enlarged and updated
but motorists and tennis players come in for
their share of interdiction and embargo.
DON'T make nudible comments disparaging
other folk's play. *DON'T* rush past a rene-
horse. *DON'T* smoke while dancing.

Some of the prohibitions, like the above,
which begins "Thou indeed, little swallow, / A
sweet yearly comer, / Art building a hollow /
New nest every summer" - appears, with
several variants, in Elizabeth Barrett Brown-
ing's *Last Poems*, issued posthumously in 1862
with a preface by Browning. Since Browning
himself attributes it to Elizabeth Barrett
Browning, the others are presumably also
hers, and the Houghton MS is a copy. The
differences between the Houghton MS and the
Last Poems text suggest that the former was
not the copy-text for the latter: there must,
therefore, have been another draft of the
poem, and probably of its nine companion
pieces. It would be interesting to know
whether this draft remains to be discovered
among the extant Barrett Browning manu-
scripts.

DANIEL KARLIN,
Department of English, University College London,
Gower Street, London WC1.

JOHN WOOLFORD,
Department of English, King's College, Strand,
London WC2.

Letters

Browning Translations

Sir, - We are working on an edition of the
poems of Robert Browning. We should like to
question the attribution, in Volume Two of the
Yale/Penguin edition of Browning's poems,
edited by the late John Pettigrew and Thomas
J. Collins, of a series of ten translations from
Anacreon, attributed to Browning on the basis
of a manuscript in his hand in the Houghton
Library of Harvard University (MS Eng 865).

One of them - No VII, "The Nest of Love",
which begins "Thou indeed, little swallow, / A
sweet yearly comer, / Art building a hollow /
New nest every summer" - appears, with
several variants, in Elizabeth Barrett Brown-
ing's *Last Poems*, issued posthumously in 1862
with a preface by Browning. Since Browning
himself attributes it to Elizabeth Barrett
Browning, the others are presumably also
hers, and the Houghton MS is a copy. The
differences between the Houghton MS and the
Last Poems text suggest that the former was
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therefore, have been another draft of the
poem, and probably of its nine companion
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whether this draft remains to be discovered
among the extant Barrett Browning manu-
scripts.

DANIEL KARLIN,
Department of English, University College London,
Gower Street, London WC1.

JOHN WOOLFORD,
Department of English, King's College, Strand,
London WC2.

Albania

Sir, - The perspective in which Richard Clogg
introduces the late Enver Hoxha (June 19)
suggests equally journalism in the conventional
sense but omits the cultural specifics of Al-
banian society. The many claims of Hoxha evoke
the role of a folk-hero of old with deficiencies
and viciousness of kinds which have been sub-
ject-matter for cultures over nearly three mil-
lennia. In the context of the identity of the
Albanian state, its social composition and its
insecurity throughout living memory the
appeal of an intense nationalist spirit is explai-
nable.

It may remain hard to this day to evaluate
the social progress of the people of Albania
under Hoxha's leadership, but it is far from
scholarly to emphasize the negative side
irrespective of material and cultural living stan-
dards. In the critic's insistence on the signifi-
cance of the formal declaration of the British
interest comprised in the statement of
Anthony Eden, the then Foreign Secretary, to
the House of Commons on December 17,
1942, there is the profound disadvantage that
its limitations have been overlooked. Eden
pronounced, after more than three-and-a-half
years of official silence, a British recognition of
a prospective Albanian sovereignty, but the
question of territorial integrity was not so
much avoided as surrounded with hostility.

This episode and much else is skilfully ex-
plained by an Albanian scholar, Arben Puto,
in *From the Annals of British Diplomacy*, pub-
lished in Tirana, the slightly flawed English
translation dating from 1981. The work is
based on Foreign Office papers available for
inspection at the Public Record Office; cer-
tain other documents would appear to be in-
accessible until the year 2018. It is abundantly
clear that the threat of aggression from
Greece after 1942, and then later, cannot be
discounted.

The military onslaughts on Albania after the
Second World War under British and Ameri-
can auspices still require elucidation. Lord
Mayhew's recollections in this field could be of
substantial interest in view of his position as
Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Foreign
Office in Ernest Bevin's time. The whole ques-
tion is of much more than academic interest,
as diplomatic relations have remained severed for
more than forty years. Their restoration will
need a degree of mutual understanding, which
should now be achievable.

C. R. RUBINSTEIN,
222 Bury Road, Thornby Hill, Bransgore, Hamp-
shire.

Sir, - Where has Richard Clogg found a doc-
ument by Anthony Eden expressing a wish to

see "a restoration of Albania to its pre-war
boundaries"?

The statement by him that is usually quoted is
that of December 17, 1942, affirming that
"His Majesty's Government regard the ques-
tion of the frontiers of the Albanian State after
the war as a question which will have to be
considered at the peace settlement".

Incidentally, Zog declared himself King in
1928, not 1935. Nor may "crowned" be
perhaps the most apposite of words, since he
declined this amenity on the grounds of
expense.

HARRY HODOKINSON,
45 Linhope Street, London NW1.

Beveridge and Unemployment

Sir, - Patrick Renshaw admits (Letters, June
26) that I had quoted the text of the Beveridge
Report of 1942 correctly, though his para-
phrasing of the quotation is inaccurate. But
then he goes on to say that by the time the
White Paper *Social Insurance* was published in
1944, the *climate of ideas* had changed. Even if
this were true, I do not see its relevance since
my objection was to Mr Renshaw's misrepresen-
tation of the Beveridge Report.

In fact *Social Insurance* reiterated and fully
explained the assumption of the Beveridge
Report. I quote paragraph 177 in full:

It will be seen from paragraph 8 of the Government
Actuary's Memorandum that the Government have
instructed him to assume, for the purpose of framing
his financial estimates, a national figure of 8½ per
cent of insured persons out of work. This needs
explanation. It does not mean that the Government
expect that year in year out this will be the
percentage figure of unemployment; they hope it will
be lower. But in framing estimates, assumptions
have necessarily to be made and in making the
calculations for a scheme of this magnitude it was
thought a matter of financial prudence to assume a
figure of 8½ per cent.

I am not sure whether Renshaw appreciates
the meaning of the term "full employment", a
term which in fact had not been used in any of
the official papers of the period; *Employment
Policy* talks about "high and stable levels of
employment" without quantifying this. It was
Beveridge's *Full Employment in a Free Society*,
published in 1944, which first calculated that
full employment in the post-war period was
likely to be consistent with 3 per cent unem-
ployment. This, however, was a work written in
a "wholly private capacity" and should not be
conflated with the earlier, official report on
social insurance.

Renshaw apparently confuses full employ-
ment as a policy objective with full employ-
ment as an assumption for framing welfare
policy; the above quotation makes it clear that
the government, as well as Beveridge, knew
the distinction.

It is true that under the Labour Government
elected in 1945 full employment had been
achieved - whether as a result of government
policies, as now claimed by Renshaw, or
outside reasons - but this is hardly relevant. It
is fairly obvious that the higher the level of
employment the easier it is to finance social
welfare. But, I repeat, it is wrong for Mr
Renshaw to suggest that the Beveridge propos-
als for social welfare and their subsequent
adoption by the government were in any way
dependent on full employment as a "fun-
damental assumption".

T. BARNA,
Beaconsfield, Westmead, Sussex.

Costly Enthusiasm

Sir, - Having read, in your issue of February
28, 1986, Ainslie Hamilton's review praising
the first volume of *Contemporaries of Eras-
mus*, published by the University of Toronto
Press, I ordered a copy of it. I was all the more
interested since your reviewer indicated that it
was "intended primarily as a supplement to the
Collected Works of Erasmus" (published by
the same press) for which I have a standing
order.

From an advertisement by the Press in your
next issue (March 7, 1986) I learned that the
second volume was also available, which I
ordered as well, each volume costing £32.50.
More recently (in April of this year), I received
a Press leaflet which announced the appear-
ance, in March 1987, of the third and final

volume of *Contemporaries*, similarly priced.
However, mention was made of a special price
for the three-volume set, although the price
was quoted only in dollars. The set can be
bought for \$195 instead of \$240 (\$3 x \$80) - a
reduction of almost 20 per cent. From corres-
pondence with the Press I know that initially
this offer was meant only for the North
American market - as a way of selling three
surplus stock of Volumes One and Two - but
having accidentally left the special offer in the
leaflet distributed in Europe, the Press decided
to extend the offer accordingly.

As someone who would have been very
interested in subscribing to a special offer, had
it been made, at the time of publication of the
first volume, I am annoyed that the third
volume is available to me only at the full price.
The £30 discount on the set is withheld from
eager and loyal clients of the Press who were so
rash as to purchase the first two volumes as
soon as they were published. I would not have
taken issue with this discriminatory treatment
had a decent interval lapsed before the special
offer was made, but this is clearly not the case.
The meanness (and insensitivity) of the Press is
in sad contrast to the magnificence of its
enterprise.

PETER VAN DEN DUNGEN,
School of Peace Studies, University of Bradford,
Bradford.

Prometheus Bound

Sir, - Christopher Litchens (American notes,
June 26) names Prometheus Books of Buffalo
as "an encouraging new contestant" in the field
of "the small and independent press", gives its
American address, and mentions some of the
"very promising series of books" it has pub-
lished "of late". I must point out that Prom-
etheus Books has been going for more than
sixteen years, that it has a British agency (10
Crescent View, Loughton, Essex, IP10 4PZ),
and that throughout its existence we at Pem-
berton Publishers have jointly produced with
Prometheus several books on humanism, philo-
sophy, religion, superstition and the por-
nogram.

NICOLAS WALTER,
Pemberton Publishing, 88 Islington High Street,
London N1.

'The Executioner's Block'

Sir, - Readers of Katherine Clark's review of
The Executioner's Block by Chinghiz Aitmatov
(June 26) may not all have recognized "the Old
Testament prophet Avdi". He is better known
to most of us as Obadiah ("servant of
Yahweh"), the author of the shortest of the
prophetic books. He is the one who prophesies
the destruction of Israel's enemies and the
Israelites' conquest of all Palestine ("and the
exiles from Jerusalem now in Sepharad will
occupy the towns of the Negev").

BRIAN PEARCE,
42 Victoria Road, New Barnet, Hertfordshire.

'Pückler's Progress'

Sir, - In his review of *Pückler's Progress* (June
19) Jonathan Keates writes that the Prince
"explored the Blackwall tunnel in a diving
bell". As the Blackwall tunnel was not built
until nearly seventy years later, the reference
must be to Mare Brunel's tunnel from
Rotherhithe to Wapping, which was in fact
under construction in the 1820s, when the
Prince was in London.

COLM KERRIGAN,
38 Ridgale Street, Bow, London E3.

The latest volume of *The Year's Work in
English Studies*, noticed in the TLS of June 12,
costs £45. It is among the benefits available to
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with a volume of *Essays and Studies* and three
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of £40 (£100 in the US).

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COMMENTARY

The rituals of war

Richard Proudfoot

The Reign of King Edward III
Theatre Clwyd, Mold

In *Henry V*, Shakespeare combined celebration of the English victory at Agincourt with action and in epic, choric description, with quizzical and unheroic comic commentary and an eloquent deprecation of the horrors of war. *Edward III* anticipated Shakespeare's celebration of English arms in France in a simpler spirit of nationalism, staging the victories of Crécy and Poitiers in the aftermath of the defeat of the Spanish Armada and much in the manner of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. Printed without attribution in 1596 and probably written some three to five years earlier, it is the only play outside the modern Shakespeare canon for which the claim that he may have written it can be sustained with reason on the basis of adequate internal evidence. Unlike *Henry V*, the action of *Edward III* unfolds without choric commentary or comic relief, finding a central theme in the question of honour (chivalric, political or personal) and diversifying its successive battles with the King's seduction of the Countess of Salisbury and with her husband's reliance on the Dauphin's honour for safe conduct through the French army. Numerous verbal parallels with Shakespeare, together with the play's own structural coherence, virtuoso displays of rhetoric and early date combine to make attribution to Shakespeare as tempting (if as conjectural) today as when Capell first mooted it in 1760. Toby Robertson, directing what is presumed to be the first professional revival since the 1940s, urges the case for Shakespeare with a theatrical verve and rhetoric to match the verbal vitality

of the text, while multiplying what hints it offers of criticism of its own ethos.

Edward III at Mold is a far cry from the open-air afternoons of the Elizabethan playhouse. The set is a black box of breached and war-shattered walls of lath and plaster. A mobile siege-engine supplies towers, gates and scaffolds as required. The men wear uniform close-fitting black costumes with prominent codpieces, offset with bony armour of hussar-style, gold-braided jerkins and distinguished by national insignia, dusty red and gold for the English, dusty blue and silver for the French. Somber red or blue banners, black staves and crash-helmets with gold decoration helpfully connect the age of chivalry with that of Star Wars. Contrasting figures are few and prominent: the two women, Queen Philippa, hamely and heavily pregnant with her fourth son, and the Countess of Salisbury, a golden-tressed grass widow, elegant in black gown; Scots in hessian tartan, Poles in furs, above all, the French war victims, a forlorn band in earthy sackcloth, bent and muskled, trundling their few possessions in a plean.

Individual character is never complex: cutting and minor adaptation have simplified and highlighted narrative and reduced a long text to a playing time of barely two hours. Extra dialogue by the director picks up suggestions implicit in the text and supplies silent characters with lines. The Queen and the Countess appear outside the confines of their single episodes, the Queen, with three sons, in the opening scene; the Countess in the closing one, adding her mural face in persuading Edward to show mercy to the citizens of Calais. Lord Audley, who should be silently present in the final scene, is allowed the stronger ending of heroic death on the field of Poitiers. Long speeches are trimmed and difficult language

(more questionably) simplified but without loss of confidence in the power of the play's rhetoric. Indeed, the messengers' speeches which pervade the action – most of them delivered by Marc Conwick in a succession of minor roles – are among the strongest moments in the production, particularly those which describe the carnage and devastation of war.

The performance is notable throughout for intelligent, forceful and often richly comic delivery of lines, nowhere more than in the episode of King Edward's attempted seduction of the Countess. Ian McCullough's King plays with exasperated self-deprecation against the resolute but infinitely courteous resistance of Annabel Leventon's Countess.

The east of thirteen is strongly led by McCullough's King, physically and vocally dominant, a man of honour but little detachment, perplexed by his own passions of lust and rage. Colin Hurley clarifies with precision the Black Prince's metamorphosis from bookish sixth-former to blood-spattered football captain. Memorable supporting performances include Jonathan Burn's frog-eyed and paranoid King John of France, Zoe Hicks's compassionate Queen and Kenneth Gilbert's grizzled Audley. But the characters are mainly types, however vividly present, and the overriding impression is of vital and convinced ensemble playing, capable of swift and startling shifts of pace and mood, never losing a strong hold on the attention and imagination of the audience.

Shakespeare or not Shakespeare, *Edward III* is revealed in Mold as a gripping play, the rare chance of seeing it performed, and so well performed, should be seized by all who can contrive to get to North Wales (or to Cambrige or Tuorminn in Sicily, at whose respective festivals the play will receive a few further performances in late July and August).

Acting out
Illyria

Stanley Wells

SHAKESPEARE
Twelfth Night
Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

I was once taken to task for describing *Twelfth Night* as the most elusive of Shakespeare's comedies, but Bill Alexander's new production confirms me in my opinion. Much about it feels right. The setting – an open space half-surrounding a mounting jumble of white, suabed archways, receding alleys, little steps, windows, and benches fixed to walls – permits one scene to flow into the next with an easy continuity. Although the firmly Adriatic setting (this is Illyria, Lady) sacrifices the sense of two distinct households, the ethnic costumes and customs provide a useful compromise between fantasy and localizing actuality.

In the opening scenes, the world of the play authentically establishes itself. On her first entry Viola, carrying her brother's clothes, is still clocking back sobs for his apparent loss. Roger Allam's Sir Toby, younger and handsomer than usual, finds an easy unforced humour in his opening passages with Maria and Sir Andrew. Olivia's entry with her black-dia train, headed by Malvolio as an obsequiously zealous director of mourning, on her way to pay tribute to her brother's memory at a statue let into the wall, helpfully establishes the resemblance between her situation and Viola's. And the production's heart seems to be in the right place during the wordless interplay of emotion within and between Orsino and Viola, as Bruce Alexander's unaccompanied singing of Feste's song "Come oway death" moves Orsino with thoughts of his despairing love for Olivia and relaxes the disguised Viola to a point at which she comes close to revealing her love for Orsino. This is beautifully conceived and executed.

But as the action continues, the mood is too often broken. Sir Toby drunk is too like Sir Toby sober, except that he belches louder and longer and plays tricks with the smoke from his cheroot. Harriet Walter's Viola, though gently appealing in her wistfulness, lacks comic drive, vocal mannerisms obtrude, and her eyebrows develop a nervous life of their own. But the wrongmost-headed performance is Antony Sher's, as Malvolio, because it seems more concerned to make a series of points about the character than to find a way of presenting him from his own point of view.

This stands in direct contrast to David Burrell's brilliant Sir Andrew, a coherent, self-consistent portrayal of a recognizable individual. Bemused, bedraggled, energetic in his efforts to keep up with his more sophisticated companions, he is touchingly uncomprehending in his failure to do so. Merely to contemplate him is enough to induce sympathetic laughter. On the other hand Sher, technically as brilliant as ever, allows the effort to be both funny and original to take precedence over the establishment of a credible character who believes in himself. As a result, his performance seems no more than a collection of actor's polios, whether he is turning his hat and pockets inside out to show that they are empty, or popping up unexpectedly close to Olivia in response to her call, or exposing himself to her attendants in gleeful self-satisfaction. The performance is based on a theory that Malvolio goes mad as a result of the tricks played upon him: in the prison scene he emerges through a trap, tethered to a chain visibly suffering. The darkness that surrounds him has to be mimed by Feste, who torments him with exploding caps, and a half-naked Sir Toby and Maria are seen at a window, absorbed in their love-making though in what is going on beneath them. At the end Malvolio is distressingly insane, a broken man falling out at "the whole pack" of those on stage like a discouraged bear. This is as forced and sentimental as the efforts of actors other than Sher to provide a tragic conclusion to the role of Shylock. If Malvolio has a tragedy, it is that he is irremediably sane.

Inhuman voyages

Lesley Chamberlain

HEIDI THOMAS
Indigo
The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

What is wholly admirable about this passionate play is that none of its issues is treated simply. Its story of whites exploiting blacks is rendered in language which is never less than poetic. Ide, the proud son of King Amda, is disturbed by his father's rationalization of the slave trade, in which he sells off low-grade captives from other tribes and his own defectives for weapons to expand his West African kingdom. Meanwhile in Liverpool, Samuel Randall, a wealthy merchant, urges his son, the reluctant, awkwardly humanist, Oxford-educated William, to embark on the dishonourable trade of slavery in the name of "realism". Both fathers, neither of them inhuman, plead experience and the need to survive while the sons are plunged into moral dilemma. William's paper ideals are tested and fail in a series of harrowing choices which begin in the African marketplace and intensify as a slave-laden ship sails to the West Indies.

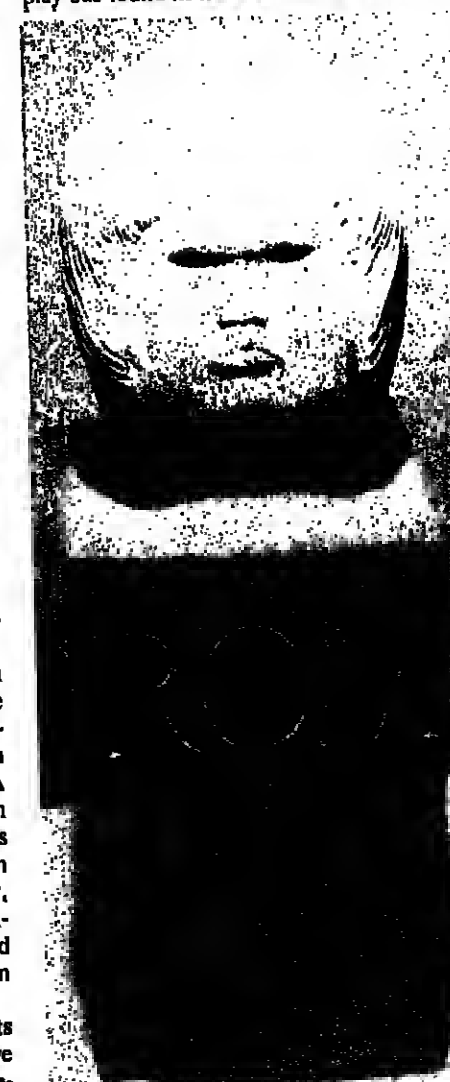
Ide, who has heard in the coffee-house the story of the white man's God and His son, and conflated it with the story of a man sent to lead his people out of exile, creates his own challenge, by wondering, since the white man is so successful, whether this is not a religious idea to borrow. When Ide kneels before the burning bush, pledging to go himself as a slave to save his exported people, the elemental imagery of *Indigo* becomes excessive. But the conflicts of loyalty and the strain on principles which the prince's mission generates are worked out in scenes of highly satisfying intensity. Ide dies to save the white merchant's weak-willed, alternately repenting and self-congratulating son.

The title *Fathers and Sons* would have been disallowed but it would have given a more immediate clue to Heidi Thomas's preoccupations than *Indigo*, the streaking dye which serves as an image of William's self-betrayal. A father, whether god or mortal, provides his son with a home and an identity; the son decides what to accept. For both the white man in command, enjoying his first taste of power, and the black man suffering in the hold, voluntarily learning the lot of the common black and recoiling in horror, the inhuman voyage is an ultimate calling to account.

The play savagely rocks innocence in its cradle. The characters are driven more by love of life than pride and principle. Ide's betrothed, Manila, and her brother, are poignantly destroyed. A newly orphaned white boy, Barney, abandoned by his father's shipmates and wrenched from his consoling friendship with black men in a foreign land,

takes despair at homelessness to a gory conclusion, killing Manila and her unborn child. The cradle-rocker, a necessary fulcrum, is the ship's doctor Pearson, practical, calm and without hope, though still capable of disappointment. With him the play rests: we are all each other's children.

Heidi Thomas, who is twenty-four, won the 1984 Texaco Youth Theatre Award for *All Flesh is Grass*, and she has been well served by an uncluttered, spot-lit production directed by Sarah Pia Anderson, with refined performances and a memorable impression of grace among the Africans. It was however the crumpled face of Jimmy Gallagher's Barney, a dejected cherub, clutching a dead cat as a doll, which stuck in this reviewer's mind. These images, the sound of the testing sea, and a poetic idiom which moves with limpid ease from sucking to bloodshed all suggest Thomas's third play has found its natural home in Stratford.



"Rom (Romilly John, second version)", a portrait in limestone by Jacob Epstein which can be seen in an exhibition of Epstein's sculpture and drawings at the Whitechapel Art Gallery until September 13.

An orphan in the family

Keith Potter

JUDITH WEIR
A Night at the Chinese Opera
Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham

Public and critical response to the thirty-three-year-old Scottish composer Judith Weir's *A Night at the Chinese Opera* has been unusually positive, even effusive, and it is not hard to understand why. The most obvious reason is that it is enormous fun; particularly in its "cartoon" reworking of a play from the Yuan dynasty period (1279-1368), in which three magnificently versatile, singer-actor-mimes (here, Meryl Dwyer, Frances Lynch and Aileen Oke) enact the story of "an orphan who finds out that he has been brought up by the man responsible for his father's death, and takes his revenge". The stage bubbles over with a mixture of wit and slapstick: expertly produced, as are all aspects of the opera, by Richard Jones.

Less obvious is the ingenuity of the dramatic and musical contexts into which this uncomplicated comic set-piece is placed. The play

cottled *The Choo Family Orphan* – is in fact Act Two of Weir's three-act opera. Around it is woven the story of a thirteenth-century canal builder Chao Lin (the baritone Gwion Thomas), whose upbringing at the time of Kublai Khan, when Chao was under Mongolian rule (a Military Governor is chillingly played by the counter-tenor Michael Chance), mirrors that of the orphan in the play. Chao Lin is among the spectators of the play-within-the-play, the action of which is cut short by a minor earthquake, leaving him to ponder on how it will end and how this should affect his conduct in the third act. Here, finally, he attempts revenge on the Military Governor; but though the last scene of *The Chao Family Orphan*, played out at the end of the opera, eventually reveals the orphan's success in vengeance, Chao Lin's fate, simultaneously enacted, is his own execution.

The affect of all this in the theatre is less complicated than it sounds and it is further enhanced by Richard Hudson's three-sided white-wall set, complete with all manner of trap doors and windows. Weir reflects the direct and very moving simplicity of the action etched with great economy in her own libretto

Remaking Russia

Julian Grafty

BRIAN FRIEL
Fathers and Sons
Lyttelton Theatre

Far much as the first act of this production one is pleasurably reminded of how sturgeon-like Turgenev's novels are, and struck by the understanding with which Brian Friel has approached Turgenev's sensibility. On a provincial Russian estate youth and age are rehearsing the immemorial debate about ideas and feelings. Politically the young want to "remake Russia", emotionally they "believe in nothing". Their weapons are rhetoric and fierce energy: in Arkady Kirsanov's case an innocent enthusiasm, in his friend Bazarov's a drifter fury. Arkady's father, Nikolai, attempts to defuse this passion with niceness, his uncle, Pavel, with languid disdain. Later, a neighbouring landowner, Anna Sergeyevna Odintsova, comes to visit with her young sister, Katya, and the verbal duels take on a more keenly sexual aspect. Friel writes eloquently and with humour, and is well served by his actors, especially by Alex McEnwen, whose timing and delivery as Nikolai are perfect, but also by Ralph Fiennes as innocent Arkady and Robert Glenister "as branding Buznov. Michael Rudman's production formalizes the verbal debates by placing the actors at points across the stage for long periods, so that the visual composition echoes their ideological stances.

The ensuing visit of Bazarov and Arkady to Bazarov's parents gives further scope for the clash of youthful ardour and aged, unswerving love and draws another fine performance from Robin Bailey as Bazarov's father. The further verbal and emotional duels of Bazarov and Odintsova at the start of Act Two, where passion clashes with fear, routine order and discipline, are given gravity by Meg Davies's fine performance. Up to this point, despite minor changes of setting, Friel has stuck close to his source. From now on he sails out boldly into the waters of his own invention, and he turns out to be a much less subtle and intelligent observer than Turgenev. There is an absurd scene of hide and seek between Arkady and Katya (who both in Friel's writing and in Robin McCaffrey's graceless performance is too silly and too forward). An increasing prominence is given to "eccentric" minor characters who provide comic turns – Pyotr, the young servant boy with multi-coloured hair, turquoise earring and convenient hardness of hearing; Princess Olga (Turgenev's Princess Avdot'ya Stepanovna), with her triple repetitions of supposedly witty anathemas. By this point several of the performances have become increasingly hysterical.

In Turgenev's novel, the long chapter describing Bazarov's death is the last apart from

the brief epilogue. Bazarov is so clearly the central character, eloquent, passionate yet domineering, the latest in a line of Turgenevian heroes that includes Rudin and Iurgunov, that this is only appropriate. In Friel's *Fathers and Sons* Bazarov's dying is not described in his own ironical, self-deprecating words, as in the novel, but is related by his father to the visiting Arkady. After this we are treated to a long invented scene two weeks before the epilogue's double wedding, which is not only trivial and overwrought, but which fundamentally traduces Turgenev's intentions.

It is Turgenev's point that while differences of generation are initially important, those of temperament are much more so. There is a strong line of continuity in the novel but there is also a powerful line of rupture and a fundamental emotional dichotomy, which lends Katya to remark to Arkady about Bazarov: "He's a wild beast, while you and I are domesticated animals." Friel's final scene is too cosy and reconciled, as the actors fall naturally into couples.

There is, however, a major problem here, which Friel recognizes. What about Bazarov? Friel's solution is for Arkady arbitrarily to interrupt the jollity and to complain that his friend is scarcely cold in his grave, that they are all unfeeling, and that he will "devote the rest of [his] life" to Bazarov's philosophy. This trade does not work theatrically – it is too clumsy and too short to alter the general tone; moreover it directly contradicts the novel, in which, under the influence of his love for Katya, Arkady "completely forgot about his mentor".

Do these alterations and inventions matter? We are after all watching "a new play by Brian Friel after the novel by Ivan Turgenev". In the sense that all Turgenev's analyses are acute, subtle and original, and all Friel's additions are coarse and trivial, they matter a great deal.

The Flame of the Spirit: a love tribute from W. B. Yeats

Warwick Gould

The Flame of the Spirit is blocked in gold as a title on a gilt-edged, full vellum notebook given to Maud Gonne on October 20, 1891. The notebook contains seven lyrics, and a further eleven poem titles are pencilled in. It will be offered for sale at Sotheby's on July 23, having been in a private collection since the 1940s when the late Richard Ellmann saw it in Maud Gonne's hands in Dublin. Ellmann printed three of the lyrics in *Yeats: The man and the mask* (1948), but did not identify the volume. On the inscription leaf Yeats notes that the seven were "copied into this book first on October 20, 1891", adding prophetically that the "poems after no VII were written and added later". Written they were, added they weren't. At some point (in 1893 or 1894) Yeats pencilled in the eleven titles, leaving room for poems mainly from the group now known as "The Rose". He carefully left two pages for "The Two Trees" between "A Mystical Prayer" (later "Aedh pleads with the Elemental Powers" in *The Wind among the Reeds*) and "The Rose on the Cross" (probably "To the Rose upon the Road of Time" in *The Countess Kathleen and Various Legends and Lyrics*). An obsession with ordering is evident here as elsewhere.

Of the seven folk copies, variant forms of three known poems are apparent. Thus "When You are Old" here concludes

Bending your brows beside the shy glowing bars
You then will say perhaps "Pride dwells with Love
He paced about the mountains high above
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars"

The variants in "The Sorrow of Love" were listed in Ellmann's *The Identity of Yeats*. He also printed this manuscript's version of what became "He tells of the Perfect Beauty" in *Yeats: The man and the mask* – here called "Dedication of John Sherman and Dhoya". Yeats's novel and story of that title were published without dedication in November 1891, and the lines were subsequently reworked as one of two poems of "O'Sullivan the Red to Mary Lavell" for publication in 1896. In that later form it has seemed that the lines were implicitly addressed to Olivia Shakespeare, his mistress: such was his frugal poetic economy,

Ellmann also printed "Your Pathway", an early try-out of the ideas later used in "He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven". Another quatrain runs:

He who bade the white plains of the pole
From the brooding warm years be apart;
Has made me the friend of your soul,
Ah he keeps for another your heart.

Dublin, October 1891.

Wholly new, however, is "Cycles Ago. In memory of your dream one July night", again dated October 1891. These sixteen Swinburnian lines, beginning "The low crying curlew and peewit, the honey pale orb of the moon", celebrate Maud Gonne's dream that in a previous incarnation she and Yeats were brother and sister, "somewhere on the edge of the Arabian desert", and were "sold together into slavery", as he recalled in his draft autobiography. The dream, announced in a letter, brought him bustling back to Dublin from Co Down to propose, but, "[i]n]o, she could not marry – there were reasons – she would never marry; but in words that had no conventional ring she asked me for my friendship". The poem runs in part:

"We were as if brother and sister of old in the desert land,
How softly you spoke it, how softly I give but a friendly hand,
They told us in slavery together

Above it, Yeats has pencilled in a stern command, "Take out". This same curlew, peewit and honey-pale moon reappear in the decidedly pessimistic "The Withering of the Boughs", written in 1899 when he knew all her secrets. But during the summer and autumn of 1891 he campaigned for her hand, and for her to join his Order of the Golden Dawn. "The Holy future auspicious you", he wrote in "No daughter of the Iron Times". This one is known in another unpublished manuscript book, *The Rosy Cross Lyrics*, now in the National Library of Ireland. There the poem is entitled "To a sister of the Cross & the Rose". Both that manuscript and the copy in *The Flame of the Spirit* are dated "August 1891", three months before Maud Gonne did join the Order.

The Flame of the Spirit is thus an extraordinary love tribute. In October, Maud Gonne had returned to Dublin from Paris, where her little

son Georges had died of meningitis. Yeats was induced to believe that it was an adopted child she mourned. George Russell was brought in to counsel her. "Shadowy Armies", one of the pencilled projected titles, almost certainly signals "On a child's death", written two years later, and not published until 1978.

Yeats gave Maud Gonne *The Flame of the Spirit* on the eve of their departure for London and her initiation into the Order. Thenceforth, he thought, their lives would resemble those of the fourteenth-century alchemist Nicolas Flamel and his wife Pernelle, who had "achieved the elixir" and were "fabled to live still in Arabia among the dervishes". He wrote to Russell from London about "the Vellum Book". Maud Gonne and her cousin Mary were reading the poems: her "need" of him "would become love", he thought. However, Maud Gonne quickly left the Order, protesting at the "drab appearance and mediocrity" of her "fellow-mystics" and disgusted by the distinctively Freemasonic rituals. Of this arduous courtship there was one extraordinary result: Russell seems to have convinced her that a dead child could be reincarnated in the same family. She and her lover Lucien Millevoye descended to the vault where the boy was buried, and there conceived Isidore Gonne late in 1893.

The Flame of the Spirit is a *grimoire*, summoning the beloved to occult service as well as to love. Its special selection of poems is identical neither with Yeats's own "The Rosy Cross Lyrics" nor with any extant sequence. It is "this book" which the beloved should "take down" in "When you are old". Further, it was to be an expandable talisman. Beyond the pencilled titles (known from "The Rose" and *The Wind among the Reeds* or, as in the case of "I will not in grey hours retake", from other manuscripts) are eighty blank pages. Failure was implicit in Yeats's suit and in this book. Maud Gonne's "pagan soul" was not of Yeats's sort. Perhaps the talisman lost its potency when many of the poems, written and projected, were published in *The Countess Kathleen and Various Legends and Lyrics*; thereafter *The Flame of the Spirit* guttered, and it became merely an unfiled album. But it remained in Maud Gonne's possession. This estimate, £12,000-£15,000, seems low.

THE EDINBURGH BOOK
FESTIVAL 1987

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

TLS
The Times Literary Supplement
WEDNESDAY
AUGUST
12
"Literature and
Reviewing
in the 1980s"
A Lecture by Jeremy Tregrown,
Editor TLS
6.30 in The Studio Theatre.

FRIDAY
AUGUST
21
"MAKING
READING
MATTER"
A seminar on children's
reading
6.30 in the
Main Lecture Theatre.

Tickets for both events (including admission to the Book Festival) will be £2.00 and are available in advance from the Edinburgh Book Festival, the Festival Fringe Office and The Times Educational Supplement Scotland, 37 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2HN.

Mystery and mastery

Eric Sams

JOHN REED
Schubert
315pp. Dent (The Master Musicians). £14.95.
0460 03183 X

Born in Vienna, 1797; died there, 1828, after six years of suffering from virulent syphilis (Life). The rest is music, for the world to delight in, marvel at, and be enriched by (Works). But this series is devoted to mastery, not mystery; so its avowed aim of relating the composer in his *œuvre*, notoriously among the knotiest of all aesthetic enigmas, can never be satisfactorily achieved. That limitation is most manifest in such special cases as Schubert, whose life and person were so short as to seem insignificant, and whose achievement is now seen as Shakespearean in stature. His works await their philosophical exegeses and analysts, their Brendleys and Spurgeons.

Meanwhile, from the straightforward factual standpoint, John Reed's monograph provides a model of critical biography as well as a long-overdue replacement of its 1945 predecessor. His own mystery of the voluminous source-material is impressive. The authentic flavour of a whole epoch is conveyed by lively extracts judiciously selected from tedious documents, and illuminating excerpts from unfamiliar works. Within the wider socio-historical field of vision, Reed focuses on the narrow yet concentric circle of friends and lovers who danced, sang and played Schubert. As usual, the middle classes were rising in the world, bringing their latest freedom of outlook into sex, politics and religion as well as art. Schubert was among the earliest apostles of European openness. The man and his music embraced all life and all feeling, heedless of the sequelae.

Appl. he was a pubertal rather than an infant prodigy, and in every sense Bohemian by nature (both his parents came from what is now Czechoslovakia). This well-equipped and closely packed guide follows his progress, in loving detail, from his boyhood mastery of the classic instrumental tradition to his individual emergence from that mainstream, an idea well exemplified by the "Trout" Quintet. Then he became stranded in a backwater of attempts at opera. But that frustrating experience must have played its part in the final phase of masterworks such as *Winterreise*, complete with plot, characters, recitative, arioso and scene-painting in voice and piano. On his own short, bleak journey, Schubert invented a new expressive language and two new art-forms (Lied, song-cycle), and developed all this into an unsurpassed perfection.

En route, and almost by the way, he also imparted new meaning and impetus to orchestral, piano and chamber music. John Reed perceptively identifies what he calls the "philosophical dimension" discernible in Schubert's later contributions to each genre; the unity of man and Nature in the Great C major sym-

phony, the tone of reconciliation and valediction in the B flat major piano sonata, the universality and profundity of the String Quintet. In such works the stoic deism of the Enlightenment finds its definitive musical fulfilment, which will speak to like-minded listeners for centuries to come.

Of course verbal commentary will sound inadequate in comparison. John Reed's language and tone derive from a British tradition which has always acknowledged that music has an import related to its structure, so that modulations and arpeggios may indeed "symbolise a search for God in Nature", however implausible that may appear. But these recurrent strains sometimes suggest a performance aimed at two very different audiences, one hearing the abstract patterns of sonorous forms in motion and the other sharing Schubert's moods of "veiled melancholy" and so forth. I feel that music-students will find themselves discarding much material designed for music-lovers, and conversely, the two never quite come to terms.

Again, more space should surely have been found for the literary background, both in Schubert's astonishingly fertile musico-verbal mind and in the copious published sources that he exploited so intensively. Here, invisible to analysis, are the essential components of his own distinctive feeling-tones, in instrumental no less than vocal works. Yet we learn too little about his musical motive-power, and hardly a word about any of the Lied poets as such, not even Goethe and Müller, who not only served many of the major masterpieces but left their own features audibly imprinted on them. In general, the critical commentary is less assured



A detail of an engraving by Charles Turner of La Malibran as Desdemona. It is taken from Maria Malibran by April FitzLyon, reviewed on this page.

in linguistic than in musical matters.

Finally, a more serious complaint. John Reed needs better medical advice. If we are genuinely seeking a link between man and music, the brain is a good place to begin. The effect of Schubert's syphilis on his life and art is surely a vital question. Dieter Kerner's 1963 diagnosis of it as the direct cause of death cannot be simply dismissed. Reed's claim that "the time-scale is wrong" is itself wrong; even in the evolved and attenuated modern disease a possibly fatal tertiary stage may supervene within three years, and Schubert suffered for twice as long. On page 210 we learn that a consultant syphologist "regarded the case as hopeless" three days before Schubert died, and indeed "may have foreseen the possibility of a lapse into coma"; on the next page, however, the cause of death "must remain a mystery".

There will be time for any second thoughts and adjustments, such as the correction of a few misprints and index lacunae; this book, as an essential *vacuo*-medium for all Schubertians, is sure of a second edition. It supplements rather than supersedes the fine *Critical Biography* (1958, not out of print) by the late Maurice Brown, whose work remains readily available in the New Grove Schubert volume (1982). This briefer treatment is now John Reed's only serious competitor in any language. For his higher yet still modest price he offers the findings of the latest scholarship and research, including his own; many an enlightening insight and comparison; eight pages of photographs; forty-four music examples; and the customary series appendices giving a detailed conspectus of events, work-list, personality and select bibliography.

Genius in excess

Rupert Christiansen

APRIL FITZLYON
Maria Malibran: Diva of the Romantic Age
330pp. Souvenir. £18.95.
0285 650300

The first recorded miracle effected by the prima donna Maria Malibran (1806-36) took place in Venice, when a goblet of wine which her lips had touched remained full after being passed around a group of quaffing gondoliers. Since then Malibran has been the subject of an unceasing hagiography and romantic commemoration, her death in Manchester at the poignantly early age of twenty-eight continuing as much to the mythology as any accurate assessment of her remarkable art.

April FitzLyon's new biography of the singer, admirably complementing the more musically oriented monograph by Howard Bushnell, published in 1979 (TLS, May 1981) - sensitively cleans away the layered varnish and switches off the neon lights. In calmer, clearer light Malibran still communicates herself as one of the handful of performing artists who deserve the accolade of genius like Chailapin or Callas in our own century, changed the possibilities of operatic expression.

"Frank, impetuous, generous, original", victim of a syndrome the French describe as *bougeotte*, the inability to keep still, Malibran danced wildly on the ruins of operatic decorum, breaking the rules of good taste at every point, both musical and dramatic. As with her contemporaries Paganini and Kean, excess, exaggerated emotionalism, and at last the illusion of being fuelled by the inspiration of the moment coloured her mystique. She could be extravagantly vulgar (Desdemona accused her of a complete lack of sense for the ideal) and she could be erratic, even impossible, on stage, terrorizing her less bold colleagues. But in the operas of Rossini, Bellini, and their imitators which made up her repertoire, she generated an almost hysterical intensity of audience response.

It was, as Mrs FitzLyon indicates, a specially modern style, appropriate to the era which idolized the *improvisatori* (celebrated by Shelley, Beddoes, Pushkin, and Hans Christian Andersen) and riot at Hugo's murder of the alexandrine in *Hernani*. Many of Malibran's most fanatical admirers belonged to the Romantic *chénacles* - Musset, for instance, wrote a touchingly fulsome epitaph to her - but Malibran was not an intellectual: her interpretations drew on her own mercurial temperament rather than any externally imposed model or programme. (FitzLyon points to a traumatic and possibly incestuous relationship with her father as a dominating causal factor in her behaviour.)

On purely musical ground the book cannot, somewhat muddy: a statement like "she was really a mezzo-soprano, but Garcia had given her a range of three octaves and she could sing soprano parts as well" begs a bewildering number of questions about vocal technique; and the thought that Malibran's elder sister-in-law, Rita Pasta, consummate classicist and creator of *Norma* and *Aida*, is unfairly disgraced throughout in order to make Malibran look doubly interesting.

But what FitzLyon does so very well is to situate Malibran in her heady and volatile cultural context. Few other operatic historians would understand the significance of her association with Saint-Simonism or her presence at the premiere of Dumas's *Henri III et son cour* - "laughing out in excitement from her third row seat... and clutching on to a pillar to prevent herself from falling".

There are also some interesting general reflections on the social psychology of the 1820s, although the elbowing comparisons between Malibran and Jim Morrison, between 1830 and 1968, operatic Naples and cinematic Hollywood are less illuminating and less clearly irritating. A closer parallel might be Lady Duncannon, another iconoclast who lived off-form in the name of Free Expression, in both cases, the element of shock was fundamental to their impact. It is a sensation which today's opera houses all too rarely

Etymological excursions

John A. C. Greppin

ROBERT BURCHFIELD (Editor)
Studies in Lexicography
200pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £27.50.
0191 19453

Robert Burchfield, the editor of the recently completed four-volume *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary*, has put together a quite entertaining collection of essays on certain aspects of lexicography. There are, in all, ten articles focusing primarily on the lexicography of the English language, though variation is provided by an article on Greek dictionaries, special studies on American Regional English and Australian English, and comments bearing on Old English.

E. G. Stanley's article on Old English elements in the *OED* is engrossing. He notes, for instance, that Old English words from before 10250 are not mentioned unless they continued as active words after that date. Any person seeking information on uncontinued Anglo-Saxon words, or words of Transitional English (called by Herbert Coleridge "Semi-Saxon"), must resort to an Old English dictionary. But, as Stanley points out, some words were omitted that should have been included. None of these omissions, however, is obvious; in fact, it took considerable cleverness to discover them. OE *ceor* "a turn", he points out, absent from the *OED*, can actually be found in the contemporary word *charwoman*, and the word *chore*, *char* "on errand, a chore" is still known in dialects.

In contrast to a broad-visioned article such as this, others reveal how tediously the minds of some lexicographers can grind. L. V. Malakhovski, a lexicographer in Leningrad, deals with English homonyms, a most knotty

issue. The word *calf* first attracts his attention and we get an elaborate discussion of the way it should be listed in a dictionary. He wonders if there should be a single listing with its two principal meanings put down successively as part of one entry (1. young of cattle, 2. a leg muscle) or if we should have instead *calf* 1 and *calf* 2 with single glosses for each. This problem is then probed with a more complex entry: *light* (1. not heavy, 2. descend, 3. not dark), which yields a constellation that can be expanded considerably when we consider nominal, verbal and adjectival parameters. Such a problem is simply part of the bureaucracy of dictionary making, having as much intellectual vitality as notes left over from a committee meeting.

Other lexicographers rise above these petty details. Yakov Malkiel's discussion of Romance etymologies in English dictionaries is delightful, revealing problems of an interesting theoretical nature. He considers it a sheer waste of space to extend an etymology beyond a certain distance. He gives the instance of English *number*, which comes from Latin *numerus* with French *nombre* as a connecting link. But to go beyond that, he says, is to confuse, for we need not be advised that *numerus* is a cognate of Greek *nomos* "law" and *nemesis* "to distribute". This is an intriguing point, but it is hard widely to agree that listing the Greek cognates is merely chatty, for the term *nomos* at least is well known, being the final part of *economics* (Greek *oikonomia* "management of a household"). Still, Malkiel does make us see that dictionaries must have clearly defined limits lest they grow chaotic.

It is, perhaps, a disappointment that there are no articles here that go outside the Western tradition in lexicography, or articles dealing with the history of dictionary writing.

The dress of thought

Vivian Salmon

STEPHEN K. LAND
The Philosophy of Language in Britain: Major theories from Hobbes to Thomas Reid
255pp. New York: AMS; distributed in the UK by Euronext. \$37.50.
0404 617220

It was appropriate for this study to appear in 1986, which was the bicentenary of a crucial event in the history of linguistic ideas - the well-known pronouncement by Sir William Jones on the likelihood of a relationship between Sanskrit and classical European languages; it was largely as a result of Jones's remarks that the theoretical study of languages ceased to be the preserve of the philosophers whom Stephen K. Land discusses and became that of the new breed of scholars who were laying the foundations of comparative philology.

Land restricts himself to British linguistic philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although he realizes that such scholarship was normally international, as he acknowledges by frequent reference to the ideas of the Gentlemen of Port Royal and of Condillac. His stated intention is not to write a historical account, but to select for exposition and analysis examples of the major types of theoretical work in language of his period. These types he describes, in the headings of five different chapters, as Formalism (illustrated by Hobbes), Idealism (Locke), Structuralism (Berkeley), The Search for Origins (Adam Smith and Lord Monboddo) and Rationalism and Common Sense (James Harris and Thomas Reid). Of these writers, only one - Harris - is more renowned as a linguist than as a philosopher, and it has been Land's achievement, as the book-jacket notes, "to ferret out from a variety of places" what the philosophers had to say which is relevant to the history of linguistic ideas.

In the broader sense, they were all concerned with theories of meaning, described as "the comparison of ideas" (Locke), "the inter-pretation of ideas in a contextual linguistic structure" (Berkeley), "the product of the formal conventions of language" (Hobbes) or "a rational common sense" (Harris and Reid).

More specifically, Hobbes, Locke and Berkeley were particularly concerned with the relationship of language and thought, and with the priority of one or the other, while Smith and Monboddo were more especially concerned with the origin of language - though they also were involved in discussions of the priority of language or thought in the development of human speech.

It is in Noam Chomsky whom Land cites as providing a motivation for his own study, though Land's is not an uncritical admiration for Chomsky. While accepting his views in *Cartesian Linguistics* that many philosophers of language in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were, in a very real sense, expounding a "generative" concept of grammar (that is, one in contrast with a taxonomic analysis of the grammar of given texts), Land argues that Chomsky's concept of a strict antithesis between Cartesian and Empiricist positions is seriously inadequate; he also accepts, in common with other critics, that Chomsky's history of linguistics is distorted by his attempt to find predecessors for his own views. While his observations, according to Land, are "brilliant", they have nevertheless led to a good deal of confusion in the history of linguistics.

The attention given to "Cartesian" linguistics now seems outdated, since the book of that title appeared more than twenty years ago, but the explanation is to be found in the delay in publication of Land's study. It was written in 1978, and has not been revised since. As a result, it is seriously out of date in some respects, particularly in the bibliography and in occasional references to the "neglect" of Indian writers, such as Monboddo, which no longer obtains. Since Land wrote this study, there has been an enormous growth of interest in eighteenth-century linguistic philosophy, particularly on the Continent.

Yet there is no question that this lucid, detailed and critical study is extremely valuable; it provides a general context against which may be set the more specialist studies by recent writers. It is also a valuable supplement to critics. It is also a valuable supplement to critics. It is also a valuable supplement to critics.

Burchfield's book is heavily synchronic, and oriented overwhelmingly towards the English tradition. A discussion of, say, Eastern lexicography would have been revealing as a comparison, for the Arabs, Armenians, Hindus and Persians all have wonderful lexical traditions that go back well over a millennium. The Armenians, for instance, have been putting together word lists almost from the first years of their literacy, and in the sixth century AD completed a remarkable Greek-Armenian glossary to the pharmaceutical vocabulary of Galen.

Burchfield's four-volume *Supplement* is part of this enormous tradition, yet it carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction, for there are errors that need not have occurred. Malkiel, in his article, discusses the use of Romance etymological dictionaries; their fuller use in the *Supplement* would have avoided embarrassment. Take the term *pastor*. The

Supplement follows recent tradition and says it comes from Romanian *pastram* via Yiddish. Its Romanian root is given as *pasra* "to preserve", which would then have a Latin origin, close to Lat *pastor* "shepherd", hence "one who protects or preserves"; with further suffixation it becomes "a preserved meat". Yet any quick investigation of a Romanian etymological dictionary would have shown that this word, frequent throughout the various Balkan languages, is from the Turkish *pastirma* "preserved meat", a term that has nothing to do with Latin.

Every close reader of the *OED* and its supplements will have his favourite errors, and that number will, with time, increase. When the number becomes too great, another revised edition will appear. Then both the lexicon and the lexicographer will be renewed, since dictionaries and their makers are a vital category that reproduces with a conscious will.

Getting from a to the

T. A. Shippey

RANDOLPH QUIRK
Words at Work: Lectures on textual structure
137pp. Longman. Paperback, £5.75.
0582 00120 X

Given the nature of academic society, Randolph Quirk's latest book labours under several disadvantages. It is based on eight lectures given in Singapore under the auspices of the Lee Kuan Yew Distinguished Visitors Programme; these were clearly aimed at a distinguished non-academic audience; and Professor Quirk is nothing if not distinguished himself. Quirk is not only a knight, but also the Vice-Chancellor of London University and President of the British Academy. "Aren't there too many capital letters in there?", the Wut Tyler in every breast snarls mutinously. "What's all this about 'interacting with the academic community and with the general public'? Aren't all these conferences giant boondoggles anyway? I read about them in *Small Worlds and Rates of Exchange*."

Sir Randolph does not times go out of his way, in *Words at Work*, to provoke the Wut Tyler reaction, laying on anecdotes about the difficulties of international life with heavy trowel, and throwing in many compliments (via his linguistic examples) about the cleanliness of streets in Singapore, the civilized climate there as compared with London, and the felicitous phrases of the Singapore Dean of Arts. However, to use the author's own insights, what has happened is that *Words at Work* is suffering from a "two-audience" problem: appropriate and probably successful attempts to capture the goodwill of the lecture audience (who were "there") are almost bound to alienate the book audience and make them feel excluded, simply because they're "here". "Here" and "there" are anyway not easy terms, as Quirk points out. They are always determined relatively; they may change in the course of a sentence; selection of which place to refer to by such terms may say a great deal about emotional closeness or distance.

The true academic drive of these lectures is towards showing how much information lies concealed within the normally unnoticed grammatical features of language, whether literary language or otherwise, and Quirk is good at devising paired sentences to make his point. "Can you help me find a little boy in a blue shirt?" is one kind of inquiry; "Can you help me find a doctor?" is another. The pairing shows up the range of meanings even in a word like "a". "The" is more complicated. As for more complex sentences or paragraphs, by the time Quirk has finished rewriting them and showing what particular forms may imply, the reader may be forgiven for wondering how anybody understands anything. Certainly it is salutary to be reminded how difficult it must be for foreign speakers from a foreign culture to pick out even an appropriate proportion of the linguistic clues to attitude which English speakers scatter about so lavishly.

Does the future, then, demand linguistic simplification, of the sort already imposed on pilots and air-traffic controllers, and soon to be

imposed on ship captains via "Seaspeak"? Probably it does, Quirk suggests, adding for good measure that similar rules will have to be imposed on us all to prevent the continuation of sexist attitudes; he cites the guidelines of the Association of University Teachers on avoiding words like "manpower", "man-made" and "fraternally", and notes that the real problem here lies in developing an unmarked personal pronoun for use when the referent may be either male or female. Like other things in this book, this particular vision of the future looks irrefutably worthy, but also mildly ominous. Social constraints on language are one thing, but Seaspeak is official: it sounds as if "(S)hepeak" soon will be too.

George Orwell (who probably would not have gone down very well at international conferences) clearly thought that the one good thing about the English language and the (native) English people was that both were anarchic, dropping case-endings and political paradigms with equal ease. He was quite wrong about the language, as Quirk shows with his multi-layered demonstrations of linguistic regulation, and probably about the people too. Still, one could - otavistically, reactionarily, Tylerially - wish Orwell had been right about both. It is certainly true that Quirk deals best with the shallowest forms of English, with advertisements, messages, and articles in magazines called *Decision Maker*. Not only is literature left unmastered, most practical forms of demotic English also lie outside this book's scope.

Norman W. Schur (of Howkurst, Kent, and Weston, Connecticut) draws on a classical education for many of the meanings and derivations pointed out in his etymological rambles in *1000 Most Challenging Words* (322pp. Oxford: Facts On File. £12.95. 0 8160 1196 6). But among the quotidian may be found *zarf*, *onkomania*, *roorback*, *nephelisin*, *negillah*, *gnathonic* and, alas, *phillipic*.

John Clare: SELECTED POETRY AND PROSE

Edited by Merryn and
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Drafting the Resurrection

David Matthews

GUSTAV MAHLER
Symphony No 2 in C Minor ("Resurrection")
Facsimile
364pp. New York: Kaplan Foundation.
distributed in the UK by Faber. £100.
0571 10643

Gilbert E. Kaplan's magnificent obsession with Mahler's Second Symphony has led him not only to learn the score by heart and to conduct it around the world, but to acquire the manuscript of the full score when it came up for sale in 1984 and, now, to publish this manuscript in a handsome facsimile edition. It appears accompanied by an introductory essay by Kaplan himself, an excellent survey of the complete manuscript material by Edward R. Reilly, and a compendium of all Mahler's letters that refer to the symphony. The facsimile reproduction is of superb quality, faithfully duplicating the various colours and textures of Mahler's pens and pencils. It rivals the famous Zsolnay facsimile of the Tenth Symphony, which is almost indistinguishable from the

original.

Since, for reasons of economy, the majority of contemporary scores are now published in facsimile, most composers - myself included - produce neat but rather anonymous-looking fair copies of their works. The Second Symphony manuscript is very different. Although it is also a fair copy of an earlier orchestral draft, it was obviously written at great speed, and the penmanship gives evidence of Mahler's forceful, impulsive personality. To look through the manuscript is to gain a vivid impression both of the composer and of the drama of the symphony.

In fact, "fair copy" is a misnomer, as this is a working manuscript. Even before he finished the last page of the score - which is proudly dated "Dienstag, den 18. Dezember 1894 zu Hamburg" - Mahler had probably begun to revise it. Many notes have been scratched out and extra parts added as afterthoughts at the foot of the page. Two passages were rewritten and appear in the manuscript labelled *Einlage* (insert) together with the original versions. The extensive alterations to the instrumentation in Mahler's characteristic blue pencil were probably made after the first performances, of

the first three movements in March 1895 and of the entire symphony nine months later. The full score was published in 1897; Mahler had made many more revisions to the proofs, and he carried on revising the scoring at intervals right up until 1910.

So it is fascinating to compare the manuscript with the final published score, as there are differences on every page. We see Mahler increasing the size of his orchestra, adding a second timpani part in blue pencil, and gradually incorporating the B flat clarinet; the published score has two B flat clarinets in the first and third movements where originally there was none. In the manuscript the third movement begins quietly like the song on which it is based; the dramatic timpani opening was added later. An interesting detail occurs on the last page but two: the bass part that Mahler eventually scored for organ pedal plus timpani was originally given to *Clavier* (piano), who play nowhere else in the symphony save for these four bars. Even Mahler's extravagance had its limits, and he changed his mind. In any case the revision is an improvement, one of hundreds, as Mahler worked tirelessly towards orchestral perfection.

The leaders and the led

Brian Pippard

GERALD HOLTON
The Advancement of Science, and Its Burdens:
The Jefferson Lecture and other essays
351 pp. Cambridge University Press. £27.50
(paperback, £9.95).
0521 25244 X

This collection of essays, all but one reprinted with (as far as I have been able to verify) only minor changes, suffers from a common disadvantage of such collections — lack of structure. Nearly half of the book is taken up with various aspects of Einstein's life and work, offshoots of the author's professional interest as a historian of science, while the rest covers more general topics in science and philosophy before turning to public policy and education. There is much of value for a variety of specialists throughout, but the whole will be heavy going for any but a handful of readers. Gerald Holton writes clearly and makes his points well, but he is not among the golden few who compel our attention to ideas in areas we had never before thought interesting. One of the longest essays is reprinted from *Dialectica*, in a style couched with that worthy organ of the American intellectual. Those who have grappled with its learned and informative analyses of current problems will appreciate that this is not an uninvited commendation.

It would have been better for Holton to have put his thoughts together into a coherent book, to reveal more clearly how the different aspects of his work relate to each other. As it is we are left with the impression that he has rather less interest in what he originally wrote and has left much of the mechanical detail to the assistants whose help he acknowledges. As a result, several personal names are wrongly spelt and, beyond helio in an authority or Einstein, there is a ludicrous mistake about what the initials stand for in the celebrated EPR paradox.

HERMOGENES On Types of Style

Translated by Cecil W. Wooten

"Hermogenes' *On Types of Style* is the most sophisticated ancient treatment of the subject and was very influential both in Byzantine and in Renaissance times. . . . Wooten has endeavored to make a difficult text accessible both to classical scholars and to those with more general literary interests."
—D. A. Russell
St. John's College, Oxford

Cecil Wooten has produced the first translation into any modern language of a key treatise of the ancient world. He provides a faithful English translation of Hermogenes' analysis based on a reliable Greek text established by Rabe at the beginning of this century and includes a substantial scholarly introduction and notes that will help the reader better understand Hermogenes, his exposition, and the historical and cultural context in which it was produced. This translation makes *On Types of Style* accessible to classicists as well as Byzantinists, students and scholars of the Renaissance, rhetoricians, and, more broadly, students of literary criticism at any level.

£18.95

University of
North Carolina Press
1 Gower Street London
WC1E 6HA

On a more serious level of criticism I am puzzled, and also disturbed, by a chapter comparing and contrasting the lives of Heisenberg and Oppenheimer. The puzzle lies in the choice of these two for comparison, since the connection between them is tenuous. Oppenheimer, for all his immense intelligence, is interesting more as the leader of the vast technical effort that produced the atomic bomb, and afterwards as a political scapegoat, than as an innovative theoretical physicist, while Heisenberg is one of the supreme figures in the history of ideas. What is disturbing is Holton's remark that "Heisenberg and his colleagues succeeded in making most people believe they really never seriously tried to develop nuclear weapons", with an implication that is unsupported by any quoted evidence. Indeed Gaudsmit, an unsympathetic commentator, makes clear in his book *Alsos* that Heisenberg and the other captive German scientists were astounded when they were told of Hiroshima. It is true that Heisenberg had great gifts of persuasion, but I do not think he was a liar. Whatever his skill in presenting the truth in the most favourable light, he deserves to be held in the most favourable light he can give. He could not muster the resources to make a bomb in time to affect the outcome, and advised accordingly; after all, his judgment was perfectly correct. As a patriotic German (I prefer Eliot to Gaudsmit's description "idiot distorted by extreme nationalism") he would have given all possible help to such a project if he had ever guessed the Americans could have succeeded, but it seems likely he failed to think of the essential technical tricks and certainly he had no idea of the industrial resources they would bring to bear. He could therefore say, in all honesty, how relieved he was to be able to give the advice he did.

Perhaps this is oversteering what is at worst an isolated lapse, and not closely related to Holton's primary concern, which is to understand the way scientists work — their unstated assumptions concerning the basic nature of the material world, their metaphors, their debt (if any) to philosophical theory. The picture he builds up departs considerably from the tabloid Popper-man of modern mythology, with falsifiability as the touchstone of scientific truth. Instead we appreciate more fully the complexities of strength and fallibility that the creative scientist shares with the whole of imaginative humanity. Whether another scientist agrees entirely with Holton's analysis is of small importance compared with the merit of the enterprise. I shall therefore not dwell on a number of disputable points which would provide material for leisurely and enjoyable discussion.

There is, however, a recurrent image in these essays that I feel conveys a wrong impression. For example, describing the birthpangs of a radically new concept, Holton says "Giving up an explicitly or implicitly held presupposition . . . is often a climax of a period that in retrospect is characterized by the word *despair*". Before making too much of this the same word is apparently used by many scientists — one should ask what was intended by the ambiguous word *despair*. There is the world of difference between the spiritual annihilation of wanhope, and the state of mind, perhaps better called desperation, of a powerful thinker when brought to a halt by a problem that instinct tells him is waiting to be solved. The great ideas of science, and not only science, are generally the outcome of something close to manic compulsion, in the grip of which the victim fights the more stubbornly the more invincible his foe seems to be. When sudden illumination brings him victory he may indeed describe his previous feelings as despair but will add, unlike the victim of wanhope, that it is such torments and overcoming them that make the whole enterprise worth while.

These are the Everest-climbers, the heroic intelligences. In all human activities it is they who attract the historian and supply the ordinary man with his epics. Whether they provide an adequate foundation for social planning is questionable, though it is questioned less in America than elsewhere. The optimism of the frontiersman and trust in the possibility of personal betterment are themata (to use Holton's word) that underlie his attitude to problems of education in a high-tech culture. Yet veneration of the great should stop short of emulation if we wish to develop our lesser talents to the full. By all means let us discover for ourselves, and pass on to others, the tale of how Jefferson mastered new sciences and contributed to technology while leading a young and headstrong nation. But educational policy must be founded on humbler, rarely chronicled achievements — the success that every good teacher remembers with pride and strives to repeat.

Of course, Holton is not unaware of this. He is deeply worried by the growing chasm between the educated and those who have rejected intellectual excellence, and in a thoughtful article exposes the obstacles in the way of developing successful educational policy. They are, by the way, not too different from our own, but I do not think that anyone in this country capable of his analysis would have left the matter without suggesting, at least tentatively, some courses of action. His argument

betrays weakness in looking forward to a device that encourages cumulative improvement over the long haul" with some assurance that such a device will be vouchsafed, though it is not clear by whom.

It was in the hope of finding something more substantial that I turned to the hitherto unpublished Jefferson Lecture which gives the book its title. For all its scholarship, however, and wholehearted commitment to the highest excellence, it also stops short of practicalities. The Washington audience, heavily packed with policy-makers, must have enjoyed its position; were they equally delighted by the absence of anything that might force them to take action? Neither President nor presidential advisers will have lost much sleep over the conclusion, "The nation does not lack good ideas. Rather, it is the scale and seriousness of current efforts which are inadequate. An assertion of national will and leadership is now needed to learn how to live in the modern age while preserving one's dignity and self-government".

Holton would be perfectly entitled to ask if it could do better, and I really think it could. Cultural leadership cannot come from a president or a prime minister unless there is a strong measure of consensus among those who carry out the reform. If, as many scientists agree, it is highly desirable that scientific leadership should be a central pivot of education, the responsibility of some of us to put aside for a while our fascinating research (much of which could be postponed without loss to society) and devote our minds to a more challenging problem. This would involve, for example, reorganizing school and university education so that many more students learnt something of science without the implicit assumption that a full-dress professional treatment is the only way to impart understanding. Also, we in the universities must discipline ourselves not to lean on the schools to turn out novice specialists as university fodder, when they should be concentrating on the need to give all in their care an education that can benefit from even if, and especially if, it's the last formal training they get. Those are my hobby-horses, and there is a troop of others waiting in other minds to be groomed and paraded. What is lacking is passionate commitment to the task of picking the winners. From my own perspective Holton's opening, "The nation does not lack good ideas", but would conclude differently. It is those with ideas who must demonstrate their serious desire to soo the best of the good ideas in the national will, so as to be proper material for the exercise of leadership.

solve a particular problem find themselves unexpectedly playing the key role in a completely different field. A well-known case is the role of Riemannian geometry in the physics of relativity; or the remarkable turn-round which occurred in 1983, when gauge-field theory (invented to explain the physics of fundamental particles) was used to solve outstanding problems in four-dimensional topology. We are told how the mystery of Euclid's "parallel axiom" was finally cleared up in the nineteenth century, with the discovery of non-Euclidean geometries, and how in the 1970s these surprisingly provided the key to understanding three-dimensional manifolds. We can read how the logicians' bizarre creation of non-standard analysis finally gave a respectable home to those "ghosts of departed quantities" as Bishop Berkeley called Newton's "fluxions" — thus justifying in a completely unexpected manner the intuition which gave birth to the calculus (without calculus Neil Armstrong would never have got to the Moon).

Each of the numerous short chapters is packed with ideas. The mathematics is explained without technicalities, but it is not thingy; Of course, not all the topics are new, with equally convincing, some of this century's truly wonderful achievements, such as the application of abstract geometrical ideas to solve deep mysteries of arithmetic, cannot be done full justice in a few pages of popular exposition. But there is a lot to be learned from this deceptively easy-going book, and readers will find the author's enthusiasm infectious.

Blasting and bombardiering

Michael Mallett

SEMON PEPPER and NICHOLAS ADAMS
Firearms and Fortifications: Military architecture and siege warfare in sixteenth-century Siena
245 pp. University of Chicago Press. £21.25.
0226 00535 6

In the sixteenth century the tempo of warfare slowed after the initial sound and fury of the Italian Wars. The increasing size of armies, the growing proportion of infantry, problems of discipline, supply and pay were all a part of this. But the most authoritative recent accounts — those of Geoffrey Parker and Sir John Hale — see the crux of the change as the growing importance of sieges, as the development of effective fortification, defended by gunpowder and cannon, first in the siege warfare and ultimately in battle, was a technological breakthrough which changed the military scene for ever was long overdue for reappraisal. It poses the problem, however, of why gun-

powder technology failed to match the advances in defensive systems. Too little work has been done on the sieges of the sixteenth century to reveal the precise mechanisms of the confrontations and the alliances between architects and gunners.

Simon Pepper and Nicholas Adams, in *Firearms and Fortifications: Military architecture and siege warfare in sixteenth-century Siena*, have made a substantial contribution to filling this gap. The War of Siena (1552-5) was a war of sieges in which Imperial and Florentine forces sought to seize control of southern Tuscany from the French. The siege of Siena itself lasted for fifteen months and ended in a surrender of the city on terms, with the French defenders marching out with flying colours. Pepper and Adams describe in detail the extent to which the fortifications of medieval Siena had been modified, first by Baldassare Peruzzi between 1527 and 1532, and then by the addition of an incomplete citadel and some other outworks in the early 1550s. In relation to the total size of the defensive modifications were not extensive; Siena, like most other European cities, was not provided with a complete bastioned defensive system at this stage. Yet, 30,000 Imperial troops failed to take it by storm; indeed, during the fifteen months of the siege the fortifications were only once subjected to serious bombardment. That bombardment, in January 1555, took weeks to prepare and produced negligible results. Giangiorgio de' Medici, Marquis of Marignano, commander of the Florentine-Im-

perial forces, was in the end only able to bring nine guns to bear on the chosen section of the walls; the defenders had time to prepare a retrenchment, and indeed a killing-ground, behind this expected breach, and to direct an effective counter-bombardment against the siege guns. In this case, as in a number of other smaller sieges described in the book, the stalemate derived not from the strength of the fortifications but from the inadequacy of the siege artillery and the gunners. Lack of mobility of the siege guns, slow rates of fire, inaccuracy, the high cost of balls and powder, and above all the relative ease with which makeshift counter-measures could be prepared: these are the messages which emerge from a careful study of the Siennese and Florentine sources.

However, there is more to this book than a detailed account of fortifications and siege warfare. The introductory chapters on the general nature of early artillery and the fortifications against it are excellent concise descriptions of the subject. The emphasis on logistics and morale, and on the preparation for war, is very much in keeping with modern approaches to the wider problems of early modern warfare. A number of relatively minor military architects and engineers who worked for Siena, in addition to Peruzzi, deservedly emerge into the limelight, including the shrewd Maestro Giorgio di Giovanni, better known as a painter of *avolante* for the Libri della Biccherina, who played a major role in engineering the successful defence of Montalcino in 1553. The book even throws new light

on the historical value of some of Vasari's frescoes in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, which portray the events described. Photographs, contemporary drawings and paintings, and carefully prepared plans and diagrams, provide a satisfying support to the text.

Firearms and Fortifications is, though, quite a short book. While it sets sixteenth-century siegecraft in a general context, it does not attempt to draw in comparative material or seek to deflect any doubts that the reader might have about the application of the insights gained from these Tuscan sieges to the wider issues of early modern warfare. There is little space for development of a chronological context for the discussions of topics like the role of earthworks or the emergence of urban citadels as instruments of a repressive power. Both these themes are made to appear as peculiar to the sixteenth century, whereas they have substantially longer histories, particularly in late medieval warfare in Lombardy. Finally, the slight sense of insularity is heightened by a reluctance to look for sources outside Siena and Florence. It was not just Florentines who would have been interested in Peruzzi's bastions or the Spanish citadel at San Prospero; observers from other states in Siena would undoubtedly have been sending out reports. The writing of the history of the Italian States becomes increasingly dependent on sources outside those States after 1450. But these are intended to be only muted complaints about a book of considerable originality and scholarly value.

Fitting out a fleet

Kenneth Andrews

CARLA RAHN PHILLIPS
Six Galleons for the King of Spain: Imperial defense in the early seventeenth century
318 pp. Johns Hopkins University Press.
£29.45.
08018 3092 3

In 1625 Martín de Arana, a nobleman of Bilbao whose family had long been interested in shipping and shipbuilding, contracted to build and furnish six galleons for King Philip IV of Spain. This contract, its implementation and the employment of the galleons constitute a kind of peg on which Carla Rahn Phillips hangs a deeply researched study of Spain's Atlantic navy in the early seventeenth century, a subject which, as treated here, is both fascinating in its particulars and stimulating in its wider implications. Focusing on a critical decade, the book opens with one disaster, the loss of the treasure fleet of 1629 to the Dutch at Matanzas (Cuba), and closes with another, the battle of the Downs, where Admiral Tromp in 1639 crushingly defeated the armada bound for Flanders under Don Antonio de Oquendo. Yet this is not a naval narrative in the old style, but a work of analysis, based on an impressive range of archival material, chiefly at Simancas and Seville.

Three chapters describe the construction and furnishing of Arana's galleons, with reference to contemporary methods of naval procurement and shipbuilding. While the technical matters described here (and plentifully illustrated with contemporary pictures, modern drawings and elaborate tables of measurements, costs, artillery, etc) may well be regarded by some readers as the hard core of the author's contribution, others may dwell on the larger problem which faced the Crown with the decline of Spain's shipbuilding industry at a time when more and better ships were needed for the great Indies *flotas* and the galleons which accompanied them or operated in separate armadas. Although it cannot be said that the discussion of the state of Spain's merchant marine is entirely clear, the account of the role of the galleon in Atlantic trade, and defence may help to dispel misunderstandings.

We learn considerably more here than we knew before about the variable mix of royal, bureaucratic authority and private enterprise, both in the provision of Spain's warships and in the conduct of its American trade. Out of a jumbled mass of orders, reports, letters, lists and accounts Ms Phillips creates in one substantial chapter a vivid picture of the prepara-

tion of the special fleet sent to the Indies in August 1629 following the Matanzas catastrophe. This frenetic operation, carried out against an acute shortage of time and money, is aptly chosen for study, for in it appear, caricatured not by the author but by the crisis itself, the typical features of Spain's Atlantic war effort. We observe the ways of the victualling contractor whose command of cash enables him to exploit the necessities of the Crown; the combing of ports for seamen desperate enough to be tempted by advance wages; the cynicism of the captain-general, who has seen it all before.

A section of the chapter about crews analyses the Crown's scale of wages in the mid-1630s, suggesting that the common sailors had achieved a far slower advance than their betters since c. 1500, and that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the Crown relied on coercion and poverty rather than on wage-inducements to recruit dock-hands for its armadas. What is lacking is a comparison of these with wages in the private sector, and a similar comment applies to the equally interesting chapter on diet and health. For the tension between the demands of the State and the resources of the merchant marine is one of the themes involved in the great transition of the seventeenth century in the character and provenance of shipping for the wars. This transition, from reliance mainly on conscripted or voluntary merchantmen to the dominance of State navies, occurred in the Netherlands, England and France as well as Spain, and some comparative reference to these non-Hispanic experiences would have been welcome.

In an ambitious study of this kind experts, amateurs and others will find many minor points to argue about, but perhaps only one cause to worry: in what sense, if at all, can one regard this mountain of office paper as evidence of what actually went on in the dockyards and aboard the ships? It is difficult not to be impressed, as Ms Phillips clearly is, by the powerful hum of the bureaucratic machine, the solemnity, elaborateness and apparent rigour of official procedures, the ethos of service which inspired many of Spain's high command, both civil and military. But what actual pay, what actual rations, as distinct from the official rates and dictations, did those sailors receive? Should we, as she suggests, give the captains-general the benefit of the doubt, discounting the accusations of fraud without further investigation? Such questions spring to the mind continually even as it feeds on so rich a cargo of information, but in the end gratitude must prevail for a notable advance in a subject long obscured by ignorance and naval prodigy.

Taking leave of all one's senses

Steven Collins

PAUL J. GRIFFITHS
On Being Mindless: Buddhist meditation and the mind-body problem
 238pp. La Salle, IL: Open Court, \$24.95 (paperback, \$12.95).
 081269060

If philosophy is understood as a continuing conversation, in which past and present thinkers contribute, in their various ways, in a shared debate, it is fairly obvious that new interlocutors might enrich the discussion. Although many philosophers would nowadays agree that the traditions of Indian thought contain much that is relevant and potentially useful, the perennial difficulty is that those traditions are rarely made available in a suitable form. The vast majority of works on the subject are either written by non-philosophical Indologists or are out of date philosophically (or both), or demand too much specialist knowledge, or are in various other ways unusable, and so it is generally impossible to go beyond the mere awareness that "Western" philosophy is but one form of philosophy.

Paul J. Griffiths's excellent short book, *On Being Mindless*, is one step towards the rectification of the situation. From a base of first-rate specialist scholarship, he carefully and accessibly explores a range of Buddhist debates about a meditative state known as "the attainment of cessation" (*nirvāṇa-samāpatti*), in which all mental functions and activities, perceptual, cognitive and affective, are held to cease. Since this state is neither equal to, nor results in, death, the question arises as to how emergence from it, and the recurrence of mental activity, can take place. Given that all forms of Buddhism hold both a non-substantialist ontology, in which things and persons are reduced to a sequence of transitory events, and a strict view of causality, in which for every such event there is a specific set of conditions, one at least of which must be "of the same kind" (that is, for a mental event a mental cause), it seems hard, *prima facie*, to see how there could be a Buddhist answer to the question.

The main body of the book consists of three chapters, each of which deals with a different school and its attempted answer or answers. All of them, Griffiths argues, accept a fundamental dualism of the mental and the physical. The first, on the Theravāda tradition, sketches

out the nature of the meditative attainment, and something of its place in Buddhist spirituality and soteriology, before analysing some arguments of Theravāda scholasticism. The main answer is that a mental intention made before the attainment begins is the relevant causal factor. This seems to contradict the basic doctrine of impermanence: how, and where, does this intention exist during the state of cessation (which lasts a set time, usually a week)? Although there are a number of images which are suggestive here (re-emerging from the state is like uncovering the still-glowing embers of a fire covered by ash; the five sense-faculties are "purified" in it like a mirror shining inside a bag instead of being covered with dust at a crossroads) there is no postulated

mental receptacle or vehicle for the intention. This is odd, since for other purposes, such as deep sleep, a kind of "subliminal consciousness" (*bhavaṅga*) is thought to plug the gaps between moments of mental activity.

The second chapter looks at debates recorded in the major text of the Vaiśhāṣika tradition, the *Abhidharmakośa*, which Griffiths translates as "The Treasury of Metaphysics". Here one is further guided into the ideas and presuppositions of the philosophical context of the debates, before the three main answers are given: first, that a particular way of construing the existence of past events can allow the mental event immediately preceding cessation to be the relevant cause without violating the doctrine of impermanence;



Monk Jian Zhen - a hollow dry lacquer figure of the late Nara period, c763. It is reproduced here from *The Great Eastern Temple: Treasures of Japanese Buddhist art from Tōdai-ji*, compiled by Yūki Mino (180pp. Art Institute of Chicago in association with Indiana University Press. Paperback, \$20. 0253 20390 2).

Treatments of a sacred text

Barbara Stoler Miller

ERIC J. SHARPE
The Universal Gita: Western images of the Bhagavadgītā: A bicentenary survey
 188pp. Duckworth, £19.50.
 07156 2503 9

ARVIND SHARMA
The Hindu Gita: Ancient and classical interpretations of the Bhagavadgītā
 269pp. Duckworth, £24.
 07156 2064 9

These volumes are intended as complementary attempts to establish the Western and Indian contexts in which the Hindu religious poem the *Bhagavadgītā* has been interpreted. The *Gita*, as it is commonly called, is composed in the form of a dialogue between the warrior Arjuna and his charioteer, the god Krishna. Its placement within the sixth book of the Indian epic of war, the *Mahabharata*, gives it an ancient context in Hindu tradition that both of these volumes ignore in favour of its existence as an independent sacred text around which varied interpretations cluster.

Eric J. Sharpe's book, *The Universal Gita: Western images of the Bhagavadgītā*, was published to mark the 200th anniversary of the first Western translation of the *Gita*, in 1785, by Charles Wilkins, under the patronage of the East India Company. Sharpe narrates a history of selected episodes in the Western interpretation of the *Gita*, including those by Emerson, Thoreau and T. S. Eliot, as well as by scholars of comparative religion, missionaries and modern Indian thinkers like Gandhi and Ambedkar, whose encounters with the text

were based on various Western translations and analyses. Arvind Sharma's monograph, *The Hindu Gita: Ancient and classical interpretations of the Bhagavadgītā*, is a philological study of selected passages of two "revisions" of the *Gita* and four Vedānta commentaries, and is much narrower in scope and purpose. Although the exposition of these classical interpretations of the *Gita* is based on careful readings of the original texts, it is unlikely to be comprehensible to anyone not possessing knowledge of the *Gita* in Sanskrit and of the central issues in Vedānta philosophical debate. As both authors acknowledge, much of the material they provide has been published elsewhere; the value of the two studies lies in the care with which each author integrates scattered information and amplifies his survey of the subject with less accessible sources.

Sharpe's detailed documentation of the text's early reception is the most engrossing part of his story, focusing on the rather fortuitous publication of the *Gita* as the first major work of Indian literature to be translated into English. Sir William Jones, who was a judge of the Supreme Court in Calcutta and a linguist, recognized the relationship of European languages to Persian and Sanskrit, rejecting the prevalent view that all languages were derived from Hebrew. With his friend Wilkins, a merchant in the service of the Company in Bengal, Jones produced the first direct translations of Sanskrit works into English, beginning with the *Gita*, which was to have been published as part of Wilkins's project of a translation of the entire *Mahabharata*. Wilkins sent a manuscript copy to Warren Hastings, Governor of Bengal, and through him it was included in the Company for publication, not

for any commercial or intellectual benefit, but as "entertainment for the curious". Since that translation, the *Gita* has been considered the exemplary text of Hindu culture in the West for almost two centuries. Despite the growing sympathy for Indian literature shown by Schlegel and Goethe in Germany, and by Emerson and Thoreau in America, Western reaction was generally negative. Subjection of the *Gita* and other texts to Christian categories by most Western interpreters led to intentional misreading of Hinduism. James Mill in *A History of British India* (1817), reflecting the dominant colonial attitude of the time, argued that even when an Indian text might appear sensible, it inevitably contained some "monstrous exhibition" - such as Krishna's theophany in the *Gita*.

Sharpe demonstrates that in India the *Gita* was until the late nineteenth century the preserve of a small class of learned scholars and philosophers. Only when it became, in the 1880s, the symbol of Hindu resistance to British rule, did it gain wide popularity. Ironically, this was a large part due to English translations, and more directly to fuzzy interpretations by members of the Theosophical Society, which championed Hindu values in opposition to those of the Christian West and lent moral and practical support to the emergent Indian nationalist movement. Theosophical interpretation is the clear source of Gandhi's incorporation of the *Gita* into his political philosophy of non-violence - though his interpretation was in conflict with those of others like Tilak and Ambedkar, who found in the text an emphasis on action, which might well involve the use of violence in a just cause. Sharma's most novel approach to *Gita* con-

text (again an image rather than an argument), that mind and body "mutually seek one another, and so mental events recur after cessation through seeds planted before-hand in 'the body with its senses'". (This position is perhaps more complex than Griffiths allows, since Buddhism universally speaks of six senses, the usual five plus mind. In the image quoted above of the purified senses as a mirror, the text is careful to specify that it is the five senses, thus not including mind, which are being so described.)

The third suggestion is that a special kind of "unmanifest thinking consciousness" subsists during cessation. The third chapter describes the Yogācāra position, which in essence elaborates this last idea. The overall ontology of the school is idealist, but none the less it retains a distinction between mind and body (the latter can be an intentional object of the former, but not vice versa). Its answer to the problem of cessation, as to many other issues of continuity and causality, is to postulate an underlying but "unconscious" "store-consciousness", which "contains all the seeds" deposited by previous actions/intentions, and which is described as such a way as to try to avoid the implication that as a form of consciousness it must have the sort of intentional object which involves conscious experience. A short final chapter summarizes and collates the arguments.

To have described all this with such clarity in 113 pages of text is a major achievement. Griffiths adds a glossary, appendices giving the central texts and translations in full, extensive notes which will be of great use to specialists, and a discursive bibliography discussing all the textual sources, with details of available translations. For all these things philosophers, and their students, can be profoundly grateful. Griffiths also wants to do something else: to show that all the Buddhist arguments discussed are unsuccessful, and that the presuppositions of Buddhist thought are thus shown to be problematic. He argues seriously and with effect, making some telling points. But as behind these stresses, our knowledge of both the texts and contexts of Buddhist philosophy is minimal; we are, indeed, like children playing with pebbles on an ocean shore. I imagine that it is a safe bet that at any given moment Descartes (of whom we know quite a lot) is being refuted by someone somewhere in the world, but he still manages to be a productive philosophical resource. One may expect that the 2,500 years of Buddhist thought to show a similar resilience.

Inner voyager

Michael Pye

PETER MATTHIESSEN
Nine-headed Dragon River: Zen journals 1969-1982
 288pp. Collins Harvill, £12.95.
 00221509 0

Nine-headed Dragon River is a travelogue of the spirit by a man who has been almost everywhere else, and written about it. Peter Matthiessen's *Zen journals* feature a multitude of small fishing towns, broad rice fields, old temples, small houses and low plastic greenhouses, and innumerable birds such as sandpipers on their way to Kamchatka and swallows gathering for the journey south. The search for places in Japan associated with the Zen master Dōgen leads to not a few hot baths, pickles and noodles, as well as personal encounters with well-known and unknown monks. A map of the area visited, extending from Nara to Nikkō, shows the site of the two famous colossal Buddhas, for which the measurements are duly given. Interspersed are snippets of historical information, poems by Dōgen, Bashō and others, quotations from the conversation of Tetsugen-Sensei (alias Bernard Glassman), "the first American Zen master to complete kōan study as well as priestly training", who was leading the trip. Somewhere beneath it all is the story of Matthiessen himself, or part of it.

Remarkable candour marks the telling of his first encounter with Zen Buddhism in the form of "three inscrutable small men" (thus do images persist among the pre-enlightened), back in 1969. They were Zen masters, guests of his wife, with whom his relations were temporarily under strain. It was she, however, who led him into his first experiences of the kind of Zen shaped by the Rinzai tradition (of which some interesting details are highlighted). These experiences were bound up with their reconciliation and her death through cancer, by which time she bore the Japanese Buddhist name Hō Kō, meaning Light of Dharma. For Matthiessen himself there was also much pain, the pain of participation in illness, of loss, of spiritual awakening and the discovery of blind alleys, the physical pain of extended "sitting", of disappointment in a teacher. 1973 saw a brief

journey to Japan, for meditation, and autumn of the same year a trek in the Himalayas, followed by publication of *The Snow Leopard*, from which the material in the second part of *Zen Journals* is largely drawn. This "Tibetan" journey was a slow turning-point in Matthiessen's inner travels, for although the dramatic experiences which he still hoped for, against the advice of his teacher, did not occur, the physical distance and contrast set his early efforts in the meditation hall in the perspective which they deserved.

On his return, unplanned meetings led him to different teachers, Japanese and American, who directed him away from intense concentration on kōan practice to the gentler emphasis on zazen preferred in the Sōtō Zen tradition. This became the dominant influence, as is made clear in the "Sōtō Journals" which run from 1976 to 1982 and constitute the second half of the work. With Tetsugen he visited leading Sōtō monasteries including the original head temple, Eihei-ji, "ascending the valley of the Nine-Headed Dragon River". In this way he was drawn into an increasing appreciation of the Japanese founder of Sōtō, Dōgen, whose quotations, such as "The zazen I speak of is not learning meditation . . . It is the manifestation of ultimate reality . . .", frame the journals.

To ask whether Matthiessen discovered ultimate reality would not be quite fair, for it seems that he gradually stopped looking for it. Again and again he records experiences of heightened awareness of things as they are. Condemned to listen to a taped Dharma-talk (teishō) in English, he notes that "there was live teishō from the ratcheting frogs in the temple pool, the sudden silence at the hearing of the heron, hard-eyed, wet glint on its taut bill . . .". Such awareness is important throughout his story, but it is the awareness of an experienced naturalist given a new interpretation. What Peter Matthiessen really discovered, in the journeys recorded here, is his own original humility. This allows him to remain within the circumstantial, to tell us about the quirks of his teachers, including "the American-born buddha" some years younger than himself, about this temple bell and that one, about buttercups, cinquilloff and mustard, about a man planting a field in bright yellow boots, and a band of Siberian buntings.

Obstacles in the way

Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

ELAINE BROOK
Land of the Snow Lion: An adventure in Tibet
 238pp. Cape, £10.95.
 0224 0237 9

Elaine Brook travelled in Tibet after she had already familiarized herself with the Sherpas of Nepal, who came originally from Tibet and have retained the basic features of Tibetan social structure quite apart from the Buddhist religion. She also had the invaluable advantage of speaking Tibetan as well as Nepali, and of being in addition an experienced and hardy climber. To gain entrance to Tibet she accepted an invitation to join a small multinational mountaineering expedition, and a substantial part of her book deals with the tensions and somewhat tedious quarrels among a group of Western mountaineers who had little in common but their urge to climb a specific mountain. Ms Brook herself had none of these ambitions and regarded her half-hearted participation in the climbing only as an opportunity to wander through remote regions of Tibet without having to stick to the rigid rules imposed by the Chinese on foreign travellers. It is to her credit that despite these rules and frequent obstructions by minor officials she managed to establish friendly rapport with several Tibetan families, and to gain through them an insight into many aspects of rural Tibetan life. Yet lone trekkers tempted by her example ought to be warned that without her experience and linguistic equipment they are unlikely to succeed in making their way unhindered through these uncharted areas.

Though the author wisely avoided political discussions with Tibetans she was well aware of her hosts' nervousness in the presence of Chinese, and soon noticed their fear of being overheard when talking to foreigners, for there was always the possibility that their conversations might be reported to the authorities. Nominally the practice of Buddhism is now allowed, but Tibetans may nevertheless be imprisoned if they air their views on religion in front of outsiders and their risk severe punishments if they have been heard admitting their loyalty to the Dalai Lama. It is therefore hardly surprising that the book contains no interviews with prominent lamas or any other articulate Tibetans. The absence of such first-hand information may leave some readers under the mistaken impression that the indoctrination exerted by the Chinese has succeeded in making the communist régime acceptable to a majority of Tibetans. In fact the many atrocities committed during the Cultural Revolution, and above all, the deliberate destruction of hundreds of monasteries with their libraries and priceless art treasures, have not been forgotten; and most Tibetans realize that if it were not for the scores of refugee monks meticulously preserving Buddhist scriptures and practices in their settlements in Nepal and India very little would remain of Tibetan culture.

As a travel book the fluently written *Land of the Snow Lion* has many merits, including a concise sketch of present-day Lhasa, but the grandeur of Buddhist civilization is not reflected in its pages. Indeed one cannot help comparing this modern down-to-earth account with the passionate panegyric written half a century earlier by the inspired French explorer, Alexandra David Neel, who opened to the Western world a vision of a civilization equal in philosophical and artistic achievements to some of the greatest creations of the human spirit.

TLS

The Times Literary Supplement

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"This substantial and attractive book should be warmly welcomed. A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop's translation of *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology* by Pierre Grimal, originally published in French in 1951, is a work at once authoritative and complete. Anyone who has ever lost his way in the complex genealogies of the Greek gods and heroes will value the forty genealogical tables; scholars will appreciate the superbly detailed references to the ancient sources for each entry, as well as the helpful (and modernized) table of sources, in which care has been taken to list the editions which are most easily accessible for English readers (especially, and relevantly, the Loeb Classical Library), and there is a full index. . . . The black-and-white illustrations are copious and pertinent. My sampling of the entries and references found an impressive standard of accuracy; the generous cross-referencing given makes browsing an almost mandatory pleasure, and it will indeed be a learned reader who does not find something he did not previously know on almost every page.

For a long time there has been a need to replace the useful but very outdated *Classical Dictionary* of Lempière. For factual and historical matters this was done years ago by the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*; and, with the publication of Pierre Grimal's *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, Lempière can finally be relegated to the shelf reserved for books which have honourably outlived their usefulness."

J. H. C. Leach TLS 8th August 1986

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Criminal proceedings

T. J. Binyon

ELMORE LEONARD
Bridges
345pp. Viking. £10.95.
0 670 81586 1

Ex-con Jack Delaney, once a hotel thief, is working in his brother-in-law's funeral parlour in New Orleans — until he's sent to pick up a corpse who turns out to be alive, and meets Lucy Nichols, a former nun who's running a single-handed crusade against the Nicaraguan Contras, and specifically against one of their leaders, Colonel Dingo Gody. With a letter of recommendation from Reagan in his pocket, the colonel is soliciting contributions for the cause from rich Southern rednecks. Lucy, Jack and some friends from the Louisiana State Penitentiary feel that the money could be spent on better things than arms for the Contras, especially since no one, including his associates, really trusts the colonel. The subject isn't more topical, and though the plot's snailly broken-backed, Leonard's ear for dialogue is as acute, and his portrayal of lowlife characters as brilliant as ever.

JUAN SMITH
A Masculine Ending
186pp. Faber. £9.95.
0 571 14751 8

Loretta Lawson, a lecturer in English at the University of London, is looking forward to a pleasant weekend in Paris discussing the tyranny of masculine grammatical forms with her colleagues on the editorial collective of *Fem Sup*. Her hopes are blighted, however, when she uncovers evidence of what seems to be murder in the *piéd-à-terre* in the rue Roland where she has borrowed from a friend in the department. The trail provided by a review copy of a deconstructionist work on Dickens leads back to England and Oxford, where

Loretta pursues her investigations with a great deal of vigour, if rather less wit. A cheerful, lively and imaginative first novel — rather like Loretta herself, in fact. It would be cheerful to complain that it's never explained why Loretta should wish to involve herself in the affair, or to point out that almost every detail on academic life at Oxford is incorrect.

RODERIC JEFFRIES
Relatively Dangerous
182pp. Collins. £8.95.
0 00 232111 4

Inspector Alvarez of the Mallorquin police is instructed to establish the identity of two tourists who have died in a car crash in the mountains. It seems like a morning's work, but as Alvarez investigates he discovers a complicated tangle which involves a number of the English expatriates on the island. As always, Alvarez, with his views on Mallorca past and present, on expatriates and their life, on food, on women and the amount of work a policeman should be asked to do, is a delight; and he's a good detective as well. Fully up to the standard of Roderic Jeffries's previous Inspector Alvarez stories.

HOWARD ENGLISH
A City Called July
284pp. Gollancz. £9.95.
0 575 04019 X

Canadian Benny Cooperman, the best-known private detective in Grantham, on the Niagara peninsula, is asked by the rabbi and president of the B'nai Shalom Congregation to look into the disappearance of Larry Geller, a lawyer who has vanished together with two million dollars belonging to most of the members of Grantham's Jewish community. Unwillingly Benny agrees to help, and finds himself in a tangle of municipal corruption, fraudulent contracts and organized crime. Neat, fast and funny, with good wisecracks from everyone; and Benny does a good job of detection as well.

THE TIMES

Henry James in focus

By abridging his five-volume *Life of Henry James* into one book, Leon Edel has brought the writer's development into the foreground, as the richly detailed background recedes. Peter Ackroyd reviews it in *The Times* next Thursday

and regularly in *The Times*, Bernard Levin on the way we live now, Philip Howard on words, Jane MacQuitty on wine, Irving Wardle at the theatre, Barbara Amiel's viewpoint, Paul Griffiths on music, Clifford Longley on the Church, Jonathan Meades on eating out, David Robinson on the cinema, David Sinclair on rock, the unique *Times* crossword... and much more each week

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FIFTY YEARS ON

The TLS of July 17, 1937, carried a review of Stéphane Mallarmé's *Thèmes Anglès* pour toutes les grammaires (the manuscript of which had recently been discovered), from which the following extracts are taken:

"The 'savant' at ingénieux professeur du Lycée Fontaines'; Stéphane Mallarmé, published one text-book on the English language for the use of schools and projected several more. The manuscript of one of these... is here published [with a preface by Paul Valéry]..."

The fact that this odd but not in itself very exciting manuscript is the work of Mallarmé has suggested to M. Valéry a number of interesting reflections. He gives a moving description of the poet teaching an inattentive class, or unable to enjoy the beauty of the autumn for thinking how soon he must return to his toll; and this leads M. Valéry to consider the position of all those whose productions are entirely useless; the worst of all the many expedients open to the writer, now or in the past; he thinks, to tell what he writes.

Though Mallarmé was never driven to this, he was bored to extinction by his profession, and only at the beginning did he make some attempts, among which this book must be counted, to accommodate himself to it, but he

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